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Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/F
Fandom:	Overwatch (Video Game)
Relationship:	Fareeha "Pharah" Amari/Angela "Mercy" Ziegler
Character:	Fareeha "Pharah" Amari , Angela "Mercy" Ziegler , Lena "Tracer" Oxtan , Winston (Overwatch) , Athena (Overwatch) , Ana Amari , Satya "Symmetra" Vaswani , Tekhartha Zenyatta
Additional Tags:	minor background characters - Freeform , Wingfic , Established Relationship , Weekend Updates , angela tries to apply science to magic , fareeha doesn't bother arguing , Hurt/Comfort , Fluff , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , angela is Bad with feelings , fareeha is bad with stress , ana amari is best mom and can do no wrong , angela is a baby bird , possibly an angel too no one knows
Series:	Part 1 of Take to the Skies
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Sent from Valhalla

by [kinaesthetic \(featheredpranks\)](#)

Summary

Angela has grown used to most of the various side effects of the Valkyrie, accepted them as part of her duty to Overwatch and the world as a whole. This new one is unusual because it is neither neutral or bothersome but enjoyable. Unperturbed and secretly relieved it's not something else that hurts, Angela decides not to question it and Fareeha finds that she really doesn't mind. That night, they have their fun- a lot of it. It's not until the next morning that either of them realizes that there's more to Angela's tingly back rash than they could have ever imagined.

Notes

This is a combination of serious hurt/comfort and a crack premise. Listen. I love wingfic and there's never enough of it. I'm trying to fix that.
(Please let me know if anything is confusing or misspelled! I am an English major, but I'm on spring break so my brain is not at full speed!)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Disengage

Chapter Summary

Angela returns from a long mission.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Like any other experimental technology, the Valkyrie suit imposes some side effects on its wearer.

She makes sure to keep track, of course. Angela is, above all, a scientist. Being a doctor comes in second, a close contest but still not quite one at all. To the others, she's just the good doctor, able to patch them all up at a moment's notice. She doesn't try to correct them. She has several PhDs and besides, to argue over something so trivial would be silly.

This late evening, Angela bids farewell to Lena, having finished patching up the energetic Brit. Lena leaves the med bay with a salute and a giggle, showcasing the joy that often came with a successful mission. It took a couple of days to take down the major Talon cell that had resurfaced in Rio, but they'd managed to deal a solid blow. Hopefully, the fragments of Overwatch would have time to rest before the next battle.

Having finished her last patient, Angela strips the sheets of the bed and, with practiced motions, replaces them with crisp new ones. After dropping these in the hamper next to the door, she dims the lights in the med bay. Her boots clack on the tile as she heads to her office, just off the side of the room. The incandescent lights hum gently as the doctor closes the door behind her.

Her office is sparse but personable. A phalanx of file cabinets lines the left wall behind her desk. She frowns as she notices she'd left one of them sloppily open. The second column, third row- it was Genji's of course. His medical records were far more extensive than anyone else's; the bulk of the files must have prevented it from closing easily before she'd left. The younger Shimada had still been recovering from a solo mission when the team left for Brazil; Angela wasted no time in giving Athena the instructions to ensure Genji wouldn't overexert himself in her absence. However, medical record information was only given to the A.I. on a need-to-know basis. Not that she didn't trust Athena, but the world of digital information was fraught with danger. Hackers, like Talon's infamous Sombra, didn't need any sort of easy access to Overwatch's weakness.

Angela removes the key from around her neck with one hand and properly closes the file drawer with the other. With the cabinet locked up properly, she turns to her desk. She can't help but smile at the photo of the original Overwatch, tucked away in a spotless frame. Shaking her head fondly, she turns her attention to the biometric scanner on her right desk drawer. She presents a thumb and an iris for scanning, before the system beeps quietly, shining blue before opening the left set of drawers. Angela steps around her chair toward the newly opened drawer. Before pulling the drawer open further, she glances up to the camera bubble in the ceiling.

"Athena, my door is locked, yes?" Angela lifts her voice no more than a library shout, but the A.I. hears her anyways.

"As always, Dr. Ziegler. The door to the med bay is now locked as well; I will tell you if any agents require your assistance during your debrief." Athena's serene tone spread throughout the

room like a warm breeze. Angela relaxes the slightest bit and nods.

She takes a blank medical debrief from the back of the file drawer and places it on a clipboard from her desk, filling it out a bit as she heads to the center of the room.

Date: June 12, 2077, Name: Angela Ziegler DOB: August 1, 2039

Chronological Age: 37 Physical Age: ____

“Time to find out,” she sighs, placing the clipboard on the chair reserved for guests. The sound of Angela nervously tapping her fingers together alerts Athena.

“Shall I engage in Dory protocol, Dr. Ziegler?”

Despite herself, the doctor huffs out a laugh. “Yes, Athena, thank you.”

“Engaging Dory protocol. All interactions are no longer being recorded in my database. Please proceed.”

“Perform full body scan of myself and the Valkyrie,” commands Angela, standing with her arms relaxed by her side. A blue light envelops the center of the room and she closes her eyes until Athena reports, “Scan complete.”

She pauses to grab her clipboard again before instructing Athena to report her findings. Vitals- both her suit’s and body’s- were normal as could be. Your brain scan was typical, neuron health beyond optimal, adrenaline had mostly returned to pre-battle normal ranges, and core temperature was excellent. The link between the suit and her body, a small port between her shoulder blades, was functioning properly. Angela makes the appropriate checks, dashes, and sketches on the charts. When Athena finishes, she swallows before asking, “Athena, what’s the physical age of my cells?”

“Based on my calculations, your physical age is approximately 30 years, 4 months, and 12 days, Dr. Ziegler.” The slight echo fills the silence as Angela takes that down in matching doctor’s chicken scratch and checks her other files. A whole 10 days since she’d worn it last a week ago. Her physical age was indeed stabilizing somewhat. Interesting. She makes a few more notes on today’s medical sheet and is well on her way to becoming lost in her own hypotheses until Athena pipes up once more.

“Dr. Ziegler, there is an anomaly I’d like to discuss with you once you have disengaged the suit.”

Angela looks up, frowning. “*Was?*”

Athena’s blue sensors flash briefly as she considers the doctor. “There appear to be some slight abrasions on your posterior.”

Now Athena had her attention. She lay the clipboard down again and crosses over to the right side of the room where, ostensibly, nothing more than a pale blue wall greeted her. With another iris scanner, palm reader and a saliva sample, the wall transforms into the valkyrie suit storage unit. Angela steps inside the open bay, entering a code once she’s inside. The storage bay hisses and whirrs as machinery comes to life, removing the pieces of her suit one by one until she was free of it, clad only in her black body suit. She steps away from the dissembled tech and enters a code on the outside panel of the bay. A glass panel closes off the bay as the sterilization process begins, lasting no more than a few seconds. She watches with satisfaction as the bay reassembles the valkyrie onto a mannequin and begins maintenance. Once that was finished, it’d be removed from the stand and left assembled in an anti-grav field so she could get to it quickly, but Angela doesn’t need to see that tonight.

She peels out of her bodysuit, gently disconnecting the complicated port that turned the simple delivery system opening into a monitoring station for her vitals. The sleek black suit gets tossed into a simple chute; the valkyrie maintenance bay will clean it and get it ready for next time, no additional assistance needed. Angela enters a couple more codes and authorizations until the suit bay looks like a simple wall again. Her paranoia was unparalleled when it came to the valkyrie suits; it wouldn't take an evil genius to reverse its effects to hurt instead of help, to decimate instead of revive. She keeps an old tech-stripped prototype in the general armory with everyone else's suits, just for show. That was more for intruders than for anyone else. No one questioned how or where she suited up, even Winston. *Nothing good comes from upsetting the doctor*, she thinks wryly as she washes her hands in her tiny sink. No amount of sweat-wicking material was going to keep all the moisture off her skin as she gripped her Caduceus for hours on end, after all.

Angela doesn't dry her hands right away but instead brings her cool hands up to massage her temple. It was always tempting to use her own tech to stop an oncoming migraine as her brain slowly began to crash from the stress of a long mission. She always settled for a couple of aspirin instead. They were tried and true, with the benefit of having fewer odd side effects. She takes two and puts the bottle back in the medicine cabinet above the sink. Athena hums slightly louder as she finally dries her hands off. She selects a long q-tip, dips it into disinfectant, and reaches over her shoulder to swab at the barely visible port on her back. Only once had she let it get infected; she wasn't keen to repeat that mistake again. Athena hums again before speaking; Angela started at the sound of her voice as the A.I.'s patience was somewhat legendary.

"Dr. Ziegler, your back has very abnormal abrasions on it, rash like in appearance. I did not detect any chemical irritants nor any physical ones. Both your suit and under armor are properly fitted. I cannot see what is causing it. I suggest you seek medical attention at once."

Angela turns around and looks over her shoulder. Sure enough, there are numerous bright red blotches, spanning from the top of her shoulder blades all the way to the middle of her back. They're an alarming shade of red, slight raised, and shiny; all characteristic of the inflammation one sees due to an abrasion. She gently lifts her bra strap to see if they go underneath. They do.

"Well, I *am* the medical attention around here--" she quips with a shrug before Athena cuts her off tersely, "*outside medical attention*."

Angela shoots a worried glance up at Athena in the mirror but the A.I. was still blue with no hostile red interference.

"Athena, what has gotten into you? This could have been from last night for all you know."

"My apologies, Dr. Ziegler, but this appears to be the result of an internal abrasion. Chief Amari would not have caused this. I simply cannot understand what is causing this. Even I was programmed with a healthy distrust of the unknown." Athena blinks her sensor lights demurely, powering them down to a lesser intensity. Angela recognizes this bashfulness in the A.I. and backs off.

"I think I'll be alright, Athena. If it gets any worse you'll be the first to know." Angela turns back to the mirror, keeping an eye on Athena's camera bubble, dimmed lights or no. Curious, she selects another q-tip but keeps this one dry. Then she reaches over her shoulder and slides it across her skin until she comes to a blotchy patch.

"Oh," She gasps, just barely restraining a moan. The soft contact translated into an electric shock of pleasure that ran up and down from her fingers to her toes to her ears. Angela drops the q-tip in surprise, covering her mouth with both hands. She looks up to see Athena's sensors blaring bright blue once again.

"I'm fine, Athena." She means to be reassuring but it comes out in a breathy high-pitched voice. She thanks the gods that Athena is still in Dory protocol; she doesn't want that reaction on record anywhere.

"Of course, Dr. Ziegler," Athena deadpans. Angela can't help the heat rising to her cheeks. That was enough examination for one night, especially in front of the A.I. As she bends down to retrieve the offending q-tip, Athena chirps "Chief Amari is approaching the med bay. Shall I let her in?"

Angela straightens up much too fast, cursing when she sways on the spot. She braces herself against the sink.

"No. Just tell her I'll be out in a bit!" She looks down. Her bra is light blue, her underwear is bright green. Neither of them was a flattering color on her pale skin; of all the days to be trapped in the medbay by her girlfriend, it is the one where she'd apparently dressed in the dark.

Angela grabs one of the sundresses she keeps on a hook next to the sink for post-battle modesty. It's knee-length with wide sleeves, dark blue and white, and it drags terribly over the blotches. By the time it settles over her small form, Angela is bent over, breathing harshly through her nose and biting her lip. *This is not normal. I should be more worried*, she thinks, struggling to straighten up and breathe properly. *I should definitely be more concerned about... whatever this is.*

"Athena, can you run another scan but focus on my back this time?"

"Of course." A few minutes pass as Athena scans Angela again and again. "I regret to tell you this but I can find no clear reason for the abrasions, doctor. There's no external signs of causes. I do not see any foreign objects or evidence for contusions or internal bleeding. Your endorphin levels have skyrocketed since you disengaged from the suit however. I believe that's related to the contact the abrasions have sustained."

Angela is already flushed from the q-tip but the dress did a number on her complexion, rendering her beet red from ear tip to button nose. Now she covers her face in her hands. She's heard enough.

"So there's no adverse effects," Angela mutters, simply seeking confirmation.

"Not that I can ascertain. Do you feel unwell?"

Angela huffs out a laugh as she moves slowly away from the sink, careful to not jostle the loose back of the sundress too much, and back to her clipboard, adding the sketches to her medical diagram's back. The record sheet goes back into her desk drawer with the rest of her others. As she performed all the lockup procedures, she finally answered Athena: "I am confused, to say the least. But no I feel no worse for the wear."

She grabs her phone from her desk and looks around for any loose ends. Distracted and tired as she is, it wouldn't do to leave her office in disarray. However, everything is in its place.

"Athena, disengage Dory protocol please."

"As you wish, Dr. Ziegler. Dory protocol disengaged." said the A.I. serenely. "Good night, Dr. Ziegler."

Angela turns out the light with a quiet, "Good night, Athena." She locks her office door behind her. Only after tucking her key rings back into her dress does she turn around and cross the dark med bay, wondering all the while how she is going to address this new side effect.

Chapter End Notes

- Genji's file is huge because of course, it is.
- Dory protocol - Dory, from Finding Nemo :) because it's a protocol designed to be erased after the session is done. much like the medical records, Angela prefers to keep them offline. Especially for the suit.
- Fareeha's in the next chapter! It'll be just the two of them for a while, but eventually, I'll bring in some others.

A Walk

Chapter Summary

Fareeha stops by the med bay to pick up her girlfriend.

Chapter Notes

This is super short! I just like the break up I had in my draft and couldn't figure out how to change it. The next one will be up very soon though! This is just some banter-fluff.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

At the med bay door, Angela finds Fareeha slouched with her back to the window, head drooping to her chest. Angela consults the med bay clock and smiles. Her girlfriend has only been waiting for ten minutes but she's already dozed. Amazing.

Rather than open the door and try to catch her soldier, Angela drums the pads of her fingers lightly on the glass window beside Fareeha's ear. She jumps slightly anyways, relaxing immensely upon turning to see Angela's face. She steps back to allow her to exit the med bay. Fareeha takes notice of the crinkles around her lover's eyes, the grip on her phone, and the thin smile on her lips. Instead of opening her mouth, Fareeha then opens up her hands in their mutual sign for "can I hug you?" At the moment, Angela wants nothing more and it breaks her heart to shake a closed fist over her heart for "no".

Fareeha's face falls for a second before she puts on a game face and smiles instead. Angela offers her free hand, which she gladly takes as Angela roots around for the words to explain the situation. She can't find them yet.

"I missed you," she says softly instead. Fareeha squeezes her hand gently.

"As did I." The soldier replies, falling into step as they leave the medical wing. "The base has been quiet without you and the others." She ducks and smiles, swinging their hands and humming. Angela looks gorgeous in one of her post-work sundresses with her hair still up.

Angela turns to look at Fareeha, dressed in a golden tank and black workout shorts. The muscles of her arms ripple like a goddess' and the curve of her body is flawless as they walk together. She'll never get used to her incredible strength and beauty, especially as every window allows the moon's glow accentuate her sleek hair. They catch each other looking; Angela has the grace to look embarrassed but Fareeha just beams.

"I need some help gathering some empirical evidence, if you will." She eventually says with a small chuckle. They're halfway back to the Gibraltar living quarters now. Here, the halls are dim with inactivity, a small mercy for Angela, as the aspirin had not quite kicked in.

"At this hour and you're still thinking of work? And here I thought you missed me enough to cuddle tonight." The Egyptian woman teases lightly. She looks over to see a mighty blush

creeping across the Swiss' neck before she looks up with a wicked grin.

“Well, actually, it's the sort of thing that's best experimented on when no one will interrupt, you see.” Angela takes a tiny bit of pleasure in the faltering step Fareeha takes when she realizes what she means. Especially in the ensuing look of affront that graces her face when she adds, “If you can stay awake that is.”

“Anything for you, Angie.” She winks saucily, grinning when her girlfriend blushes even more. “Can I pick you up at least, so we can get to my room faster?”

Angela craves the contact even more so than she craves the fun they'd be having soon, having gone the several days without Fareeha at her side. She stops and thinks carefully.

“Only if I can have a piggyback.

Fareeha bends down and Angela hops up, wrapping her legs around her waist and her arms around her neck. When Fareeha has her arms securely around Angela's legs, she takes off at an easy dash, with Angela burying her face in her neck all the while.

Chapter End Notes

-Angela and Fareeha wouldn't use ASL (I'm American, that's the sign language I'm most familiar with) and I'm not sure if there'd be a universal sign language by then but they're a very consent-conscious couple so they have a small set of sign language they developed between the two of them. That way, when either of them doesn't feel very verbal, they can still ask for and offer comfort.

-Angela and Fareeha are both neurodivergent. I don't make the rules folks. I'm trying not to project any specifics, even if this is self-indulgent, but... still.

-Also, Angela's birthday is the Swiss day of independence because I'm an unoriginal bastard.

-I'm a big fan of big buff beautiful Fareeha and her tiny girlfriend, okay, listen.

Experiments

Chapter Summary

Fareeha and Angela make it to the bedroom.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Fareeha's room is, as always, pristine as a military barrack, similar to Angela's own office. The personal touches are minimal; the most Fareeha thing in the room is certainly the dark blue and orange patterned comforter on the queen bed. When Angela hops down from her ride, she notices its disarray immediately: the bedside lamp casting soft light onto rumpled covers, a novel abandoned on the bed, the conspicuously fluffed pillows and turned-back covers on the other side of the bed.

"Were you waiting up for me, dear?"

It's Fareeha's turn to blush sheepishly. "I didn't know how long checkups were going to take. I bumped into Lena in the kitchen, she said she was the last one out, so I figured it wouldn't be much longer. Just thought..."

Angela reaches up, hovering her hand just shy of Fareeha's cheek. The taller woman sighs and leans into the contact, drawing closer as the blonde rubbed soft circles onto her cheek. She knows it wouldn't do much good to apologize but she does so anyway, repeating "I'm sorry" like a mantra until Fareeha shushes her gently.

"The team needs you. I don't mind waiting up when you come home."

Angela hums, quietly trying to refocus her thoughts from guilt to the issue at hand.

"I discovered...an anomaly. Perhaps another side effect of the valkyrie." Fareeha's eyes snap open at the admission, sharp eyes watching Angela as she worries her lip. As it always did when she shared the private details of her and her suit, her voice has dropped to a whisper, threaded with a vulnerable tremor. "It is not...painful...or even unpleasant. Athena ran multiple tests and she can't find what's wrong. It doesn't feel bad. It's unexplainable. I need to know more about it, but quite frankly it's embarrassing..." Her slender hand falls from the other's face as she trails off.

Fareeha offers hands around Angela's face in return, waiting until she nods before cupping her cheeks in her warm, calloused hands. She shudders a little at the contact, but not without noting how muted it felt from before.

"Tell me what to do," commands Fareeha softly.

"Take my dress off. I'll show you." Angela turns around without another word. Baffled but intrigued, Fareeha undoes the two buttons at the nape of the dress, sliding the shoulders off until the dress puddles around her waist. As bits of the fabric slipped past the blotches, the smaller woman whimpers softly. Fareeha steps back in shock. Angela's skin looks angry, like a mess of hornets have stung it relentlessly. There is a clear distinction between the usual alabaster quality of the doctor's skin and the bright pink and red inflamed blotches covering most of her upper back.

“Angie, this certainly *looks* painful.” She steps around into her lover’s view, only to see her flushed, eyes squeezed shut. That’s a look she knows very well. *Not painful but embarrassing, huh?* The soldier thinks, trying to restrain a wicked grin and letting out a low whistle instead. “Or not.”

“Please don’t tease me.” Despite the lighting, Angela’s pupils are already blown so wide Fareeha can hardly see the thin ring of her iris. “This is ridiculous. There’s no function for this.”

“I mean, there’s hardly a practical reason for the suit to keep you looking hot for years to come. And who says it doesn’t have a function?” She leans over to whisper in her girlfriend’s ear. “You know clits only have one function, don’t you, doctor?”

Angela growls. “You are the *worst*.” Fareeha only laughs as she lets herself be pushed back onto the bed, landing with an ‘oof’. Angela straddles her, not quite touching her yet.

“I need you to take notes. I don’t think I can be trusted to remember anything properly. Every time my back...*reacts*, everything goes so foggy.” She lets out a frustrated huff at the thought of not being able to accomplish this herself. Even if Fareeha’s handwriting was neater, she could be positively bland in her observations.

“Your bra doesn’t seem to be a problem.” Fareeha remarks with a smirk. Brought out of her thoughts, Angela cups her breasts in surprise, as if she’d forgotten about it already.

“You’re right! Could it be...the pressure? Oh, the nerves must be constantly overstimulated! ‘Reeha, you’re a genius!”

Fareeha does not feel like one as Angela, instead of continuing their fun, climbs off her and bolts for her shower, nearly tripping over her dress in her haste. As the shower begins to run, she slaps a hand over her brow. As much as she loves her doctor, Angela could really be frustrating when her attentions changed. Resigned, Fareeha feels around for her novel with her other hand.

“*Liebe*, I was quite serious about needing your help.” Angela stands in the doorway in her underwears with an eyebrow raised. Fareeha scrambles out of the bed to join her, trying not to snicker at her girlfriend trying to pose in her mismatched intimates.

“Can I kiss you?” Fareeha breathes out, as Angela closes the door behind them. It never got old, seeing Angela blush and nod quietly, before stretching up on tiptoe to meet her. They kiss for several moments; their hands frantically roam until Angela breaks off with a gasp. The taller woman snatches her hands back as if she’s touched a hot stove.

“I’m so sorry! I thought they were higher up.”

Angela takes her hands and held them in hers. “We’ve got to start taking data at some point, no?” She grins nervously. Fareeha can’t help but be drawn back to her swollen lips and flushed cheeks but she manages to nod. “I’ll try not to hold back any reactions anymore, okay? I want to have a, ah, constant way of measuring effectiveness, I suppose? Just...figure out what doesn’t work, okay? So this doesn’t become a problem in public.”

“Angie, of course, but if anything starts to hurt or be too much, just say the word. We don’t know anything about your...condition.” Fareeha watches as she sighs, taking off her watch and undoing her ponytail.

“Of course, *liebe*. And if I am too much, please do the same. Otherwise, let’s enjoy each other, shall we?”

Chapter End Notes

-gonna apologize right now for the lack of incredibly detailed sexy times in this chapter or any other one. i don't know how to write detailed or accurate smut of any kind. :(

-y'all're gonna get real tired of me drawing hard/soft contrasts between these two. Angela is soft on the outside, all surgeon hands and delicateness, but hard as hell on the inside, constantly fighting the urge to be closed off and aloof toward her girlfriend, sometimes not quite managing this with the rest of the team. Fareeha is so tough, all brawn and callouses and chiseled figure but listen, that is one soft lady. She loves being sweet and comforting, doing little romantic things and imagining a world of peace where she doesn't need to suit up to fight for justice because it's already been won. She's been through a lot that makes her tough, but she's retained a soft interior through sheer force of will.

-Angela, for all that she likes to be in control, likes to be bossed around by Fareeha.

-Fareeha is the only one who has any actual confirmation of any valkyrie side effects. Angela's super tight-lipped about it but she trusts Fareeha enough to let her know, even it makes her feel super vulnerable. Fareeha is aware of this and takes cues from Angela when it comes to addressing it. They've been over the anti-aging side effect enough that they both comfortable joke about it, since Angela has realized she's not going to get younger so much as she's essentially stopped aging. Angela's not terribly comfortable with the perfect memory granted by the suit preventing neuron degeneration because she has seen Some Shit. There's some other effects that are a bit mundane and not worth mentioning

-Also, I'm aware that the whole "Mercy is immortal/never-aging because of the suit" has been debunked by Blizzard staff but I'm ignoring that, thanks.

-The blotches look like giant hives but they're actually just giant clusters of oversensitive nerves. Just go with it for now, it will be explained later.

-Thier safe word is Toblerone. I'm not even elaborate on that but let's just say it's embarrassing enough to shut down any fun times.

-Thanks for all the hits and kudos so far! I'm gonna post one more chapter for today and then hold off on my reserve for a couple of days while I continue writing.

Observations

Chapter Summary

Fareeha reflects on a wild night.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#).

It ended up being easier to take notes than Fareeha had anticipated. It became very obvious that, whatever function they might take on in the future, the blotches have only one purpose now: cause Angela mind-blowing pleasure at the lightest touch. Exhausted, Angela fell into a deep sleep after only a couple of hours of “experimentation”, after which Fareeha had expected to have to satisfy herself. However, Angela, lust-ridden as she was by this strange development, had not forgotten her. She made a concerted effort to satisfy her in exchange for her “empirical observations”.

She lazily stretches out one arm to grab her notepad and pen from the bedside table. It won't hurt to look over her notes again. Angela's breathing is deep and even, thankfully. The blonde is curled up on her side, her hair splayed across the pillow. The makeshift contraption around her is doing its job. Obviously, sleeping on her back was not going to work, so Angela had curled up on her side only to yelp weakly when the covers Fareeha draped over her deflated and tickled her blotches. She'd jerked, her back arching in response and yelped again. Already exhausted, the kneejerk reactions were draining. Fareeha hated herself for taking the covers off, quickly reassuring her lover, and dashing off to find something would keep her from shivering uncovered the whole night. It seemed like a lifetime until she burst back into the room with her plan. The solution was this: a section of half a barrel, wide enough to protect the blotches from the blanket. It acted like a tent of sorts, allowing Angela to be covered by warm blankets without them touching her back.

Constant pressure, as far as Fareeha could tell, was the only element that shut the reaction down. The shower spray, for example, only elicited a reaction for a second or two before Angela had frowned, saying “I don't feel it anymore.” The constant drumming of the water had numbed the ultra-sensitive nerves by simply overstimulating them until they shorted out. However, once Fareeha added a light touch of her fingers, the nerves had come to life again, much to Angela's dismay.

That was the first of many times in which Fareeha had to stop her ministrations, despite what she'd been told, just to make sure Angela was alright. Every time it was not pain, but the embarrassment that overwhelmed the pleasure. She'd rubbed her lover's shoulders until she straightened up and nodded for her to continue once more. Fareeha herself was used to being in control of herself, as was Angela. For her, it must have been positively mortifying.

After the shower, it happened much less; there simply wasn't a constant pressure source to contend with and so Angela forgot she was supposed to be embarrassed at all and definitely began to have some fun.

The varying pressure of a well-placed massage had Angela squirming beneath her. Light dances across the blotches left her shivering at every touch, anticipating the next. Even her blunted fingernails raking across her back had left Angela breathless. Fareeha was astonished to see her lover so constantly undone. Whenever she paused for too long, Angela whined and returned the

favor until Fareeha felt like getting back to research.

Any loose fabric was a no go. Angela squirmed and writhed while they were under the sheets. The constant light touches drove her into fits in which she couldn't concentrate.

One spot of pressure didn't negate less-pressured touches though. Fareeha was no neurologist but for her to press her thumb down in one spot and then trail lightly a centimeter away and still get a reaction? The nerves had to be highly concentrated for that.

Hickies were a No. Capital N, hard stop No. She'd barely began sucking on the skin over her shoulder blade when Angela screamed so loud that Fareeha had taken an ungraceful tumble off the bed. The Swiss had sat up panting, eyes wide and searching for her. Fareeha landed hard on her ass and sat there cursing up a storm until Angela knelt beside her, trying to reassure her that it hadn't hurt, that they could try again. No. Hard No. It took some convincing to get the Egyptian back into the bed at all and some gentle persuasion to get her back in the mood.

In the end, the pressure theory is the best she has, or rather the best Angela has. Fareeha loves her but there couldn't be any way Angela thought she was going to come up with an answer to this medical mystery alone. Continuous pressure was the only thing that hadn't triggered the response. She taps the pen against her lip, fighting the urge to roll over and go to sleep. She wanted a solid answer that Angela could wake up to, something to distract her from what was surely going to be a mortifying collection of memories in the eyes of the calm rational doctor. She glances over to the closet where her workout gear lay draped over a chair, ready for her morning routine to begin.

"Well, Chief Amari," she whispers to herself, "I think you have an idea."

Chapter End Notes

-Fareeha does not like any sort of pain play. The thought of Angela, or anyone she cares about, being in pain nauseates her, sends her into a sort fight or flight kind of panic. Even the idea of being the one to cause Angela pain gives her cold sweats. While she is a justice-driven soldier, she can't bear to bring pain into civilian life. If someone she loves is hurt, it's her duty to protect them from the source. So pain is a Hard No, fullstop. Fareeha loves being able to have a relationship built around joy and pleasure and comfort and Angela is happy to give her that.

-That note is very important. Keep it in mind. :)

-They're both going to be very sore in the morning. I don't know a lot about sex because I'm aware that people with vaginas have less cool-down and fewer limits (if any) when it comes to orgasms in relation to people with penises. But yeah, they went at it for a while, or until Angela got tired. :)

-Also, unless I'm told otherwise, Fareeha is Chief because a) that's what I remember from the comics and b) her mom is captain Amari and even if Fareeha is a captain, she does not want to be thinking about her mother while she is in bed with her girlfriend.

-This is my last chapter for a few days, but fear not! Posting this has given me a burst of inspiration that I desperately needed. I wrote 18 pages of this in two days on a whim and I feel like I can do that again with the ego boost y'all are providing, lmao. I have lots written already.

-Because I'm a teasing bastard: prepare for shit to hit the fan next update. :)

Anguish

Chapter Summary

The morning after takes a turn for the worse.

Chapter Notes

I just returned from a day trip and didn't get a chance to write, but since this chapter is fairly long, I'm posting it now to tide you over and answer some questions. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Angela breathes deeply before opening her eyes to the pale grey walls of the Gibraltar standard bedroom. The circular blinds were raised from the porthole window and that is how she knew she was in Fareeha's room. In her own room, the blinds gathered dust. The doctor loathed mornings, and everyone knew it. Only Fareeha gained a "special significant other" pass regarding her early morning ire. For her, she would get up, but only her.

Hearing the water running, she smiles; perhaps she can join in on the shower. Only when she rolls onto her back do the events of the previous night come back to her. Even weak and groggy, she knows the pain that shocks her as her naked back meets the bed was nothing like what she had experienced earlier. Angela's gasps quickly turn to hyperventilation as her back spasms. She thrashes weakly against the bed, trying to push off to roll back to her side to no avail.

"Fareeha!" She cries out, helplessly struggling. "Shit, 'reeha! Help, help me *please!*" Tears spring to her eyes, hearing her own weak cries for help, unsure if they'd be heard. Her legs were much too weak to push up and away from the bed. Distantly she registers the shower stopping before the bathroom door flies open and the Raptora pilot vaults onto the bed, ripping away the covers and the barrel and pulling her to an upright position by her shoulders.

"Shit, Angie," say Fareeha, as she helps the sobbing woman get her legs underneath herself. "I...shit, I didn't think you were going to wake up for a while. You were exhausted. I'm so sorry." Fareeha shuts up and absently rubs circles on Angela's knees while she cries into her hands, tears and snot dribbling down her face. She waits until the tears peter out to gentle hiccups before speaking again.

"What happened, *habibti*?"

Angela doesn't uncover her face. She takes one, two, three deep, shuddering breaths and whispers, "I thought I was going to die. It was worse than a bullet wound, worse than shrapnel. I thought...I thought I was being electrocuted. Terrifying..." She breaks off with another sob and Fareeha shudders.

She'd been struck by lightning before, just once. Trying to fly the Raptora back to base speeding low over the desert during a freak storm, thinking it wouldn't catch her if she stayed low. She'd been wrong of course and the Raptora had been put in for repairs for three weeks. She herself had

been treated to a stern talking-to in the medbay of HSI, but was otherwise none worse the wear for it. Didn't mean she didn't remember how it *felt*.

She smoothes down Angela's loose hair in soothing strokes, taking care to stick to the sides and not her back. She murmurs all the things her mother would tell her after nightmares and tells her all the reassurances that they both needed to hear. When the sobs die down again, Angela looks up for the first time into her lover's dark brown eyes, stunned for a second. She swallows. Fareeha hadn't so much as complained throughout the whole saga, not once. Dealing with her hyperstimulated lover was probably not on her list of things to do while in this relationship. Neither was rescuing her from a bout of excruciating pain. The taller woman realizes she's staring and the tattoo around her eye crinkles as she scrunches up her nose in confusion.

Don't apologize.

"Thank you for taking care of me." Angela blurts softly instead, and the blush that rose to her cheeks was gentle, unlike yesterday's furious blooms.

"It's nice for the tables to be turned every once in awhile, Angie. I would do it anytime." Fareeha's smile lights up her whole face and Angela's struck by the thought that she doesn't deserve this woman.

"You're wet." Angela reaches up to touch her dripping hair but draws her hand back as she remembered where it had just been. No sense in getting snot all over her. "You were in the shower when I woke up."

"Yeah, I should have left the door open." Fareeha cast her eyes everywhere but her face.

"Don't blame yourself, *leibe*." With the help of the adrenaline boost, Angela's brain is waking up fast and processing everything she remembers, anything she felt now. "This is an...odd situation."

"You were okay last night." She nervously pushes her dripping black hair out of her face. "I thought you were just tired; I didn't think that you'd be hurting when you woke up."

"Well," says the doctor, smirking, "As far as I can tell, neither of us had any reason to believe otherwise last night."

Fareeha places a gentle kiss on Angela's forehead, then sits back with a smirk of her own. "Perhaps you're a gremlin after all."

Angela's brow crinkles until she recognizes the reference. "How old *are* you? That movie's nearly a hundred years old. I'm no gremlin, you ass!" She reaches back for a pillow as Fareeha scrambles back out of reach, laughing.

"I got you wet, a couple of different ways mind you, you ate after midnight that's for *certain*," Angela throws the pillow at her and she dodges. "-and you've seen the sunlight! You're a total gremlin now, Angie. Oh no, what's a girl to do?"

Angela shrieks playfully and lobs another pillow. "I am no fiendish imp, I am an angel, an absolute delight in bed and a force of nature on the field! Don't you forget it, Amari!" They both dissolve into giggles so loud that they almost miss Athena's quiet interruption.

"Chief Amari," announces Athena, from the control panel next to the door. "Miss Vaswani is here to see you."

Frozen in the motion of throwing another pillow, Angela's eyes widen as she meets her girlfriend's gaze. Both of them are naked, one of them incapacitated, the other soaking wet.

Without taking her eyes off her charge, Fareeha responds, “Athena, open the voice channel please.” An ensuing beep is all the indication that the channel is open.

“Good morning, Satya!”

“Greetings, Fareeha. I received your message from last night. You were correct in surmising that I would have such a garment in Dr. Ziegler’s size. From the lack of response from her door, I assumed she would be here with you.”

Angela frantically makes throat-slitting motions.

“Right in one, Satya!” The doctor pretends to fire a pistol at the soldier, who bats the imaginary bullet away with a grin. “But she’s still asleep and I just got out of the shower. Would you mind leaving it at the door? I’ll return it washed, dried, and folded as soon as I can order the doc one of her own.”

“Very well. I will see you later.” There’s a slight rustling sound over the channel.

“See you later, Satya!” Athena closes the channel with a beep and quietly goes dormant once more. Angela lets the pillow she’d been holding fly. Fareeha catches it this time, grins then shakes her soaked hair.

Angela jerks back, letting out an indignant cry as she’s splattered with water. Within seconds, Fareeha has her by the wrists, yanking her forward just before her back hits the bed’s backboard. The doctor couldn’t have felt more foolish for her reaction.

“Maybe not my best revenge tactic.” Strong hands released her wrists, but Angela knew nothing would have hurt more than hitting that backboard. “You feel like you can take a walk with me to the bathroom and sit very gingerly while I finish my shower?”

Fareeha tries not to wince at their sign for ‘yes’ that Angela shakily pokes out of their clumsy embrace. Both of their breathing takes a few moments to even out. The young soldier can feel already feel the toll this new development is taking on them both. Overall, this morning was simply not going their way, to say the least. Eventually, they climb off the bed and shuffle to the bathroom. She quietly examines the doctor’s back.

The blotches had not changed in color or shape or spread. They still looked terribly angry but now they acted the part too. Angela sits down on the toilet and leans forward, pushing her hair away from her face. Once she’s settled on the throne, Fareeha places some flushable baby wipes on the rug beneath her and steps back into the shower. Masked by the flow of the water, she lets out a little sigh of relief when the packet rustles.

This was going to be a long day.

Chapter End Notes

- Angela has worked too many night shifts, performed too many long surgeries, and been in college for too many years to be a morning person. Fareeha used to be a soldier, and a damn good one, so she’s up at dawn on the regular.
- when you’re injured or recovering from surgery, flushable baby wipes are a godsend, can confirm. Fareeha has a stash because sometimes her muscles are sore and it’s not

worth bugging Angela but she's too tired to take a shower but she doesn't want to feel gross. Hence, FBW.

-I too hope to have a pillow fight this adorable with my girlfriend one day.

-Ana is a sucker for cult classics and Fareeha's seen them all, including the really bad 75th-anniversary version of The Gremlins.

-Angela's perfect memory is both a gift and a curse.

-Overwatch rooms are soundproof, including the doors. Originally, I was gonna have Satya knock, but then I realized that would be a point of weakness in the soundproofed rooms needed to enable the wild night they had. So, AI doorbells!

-It's gonna be a cameo parade for a long time y'all! Worry not, Satya, Lena, and others will return in force in later chapters.

Trial Run

Chapter Summary

Fareeha puts her theory to the test.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

By the time Fareeha finishes washing her hair and steps out of the shower, Angela has proceeded to wash up with a little more diligence at the sink with a washcloth and a bar of soap. She's tied her hair up, pulled on a spare pair of underwear from her designated drawer, and thrown on the sweatpants that Fareeha had planned to wear after her own shower. Even though she looks a bit ridiculous with the legs and the hem rolled up, she doesn't laugh. It's a thinly kept secret that Angela likes to drown in Fareeha's clothes for comfort. As she dries her hair, she notices the bra in her partner's hands.

"Don't try the bra yet. I have another idea."

Angela only hums in response, clearly lost in her own ideas. The Egyptian rolls her eyes and throws on her own bra, boxer briefs, and t-shirt before leaving the bathroom to go grab Vaswani's delivery. It isn't until she reaches the bathroom door again that she realizes that the morning's events put a kink in her plan.

"Ange, I think you're right about the pressure over-stimulating the nerves and shutting them down."

The blonde raises an eyebrow in the mirror. She seems to sense the upcoming caveat.

"Satya has compression tanks in your size. I figured the thickness and the pressure will reduce the chance of outside interaction but," the soldier fiddled with the black garment in her hands for a moment before continuing. "That was before this morning. I can't let you put this on without testing it first. I have to know if the reaction still stops for the pressure."

Angela freezes, expression shuttered and unreadable.

"The shower stopped it in about 3 seconds, and if it doesn't stop after that, I'll stop. We'll figure something else out. But I'm not letting you put this on unless I'm sure it won't just cause you a shit ton of pain."

Still silent, frozen.

"Please, trust me not to hurt you."

A shallow exhale. Another. Eyes closed in contemplation. Then: "Do it."

Fareeha lets out a breath she hadn't known she was holding. "Okay. Can you straddle the toilet for me?" Angela obliges, moving swiftly to the toilet, closing the seat top and sitting with back to her. After putting the compression vest on the sink counter, she nips back into the bedroom and comes back with a pillow which she hands to Angela.

“This is going to suck, Ange. I’m really sorry. I wish there was another way to be sure.” She settles on her knees behind her and asks, “Do you want to hold my other hand?”

Angela, who had her face buried in the pillow already, wordlessly drops her right hand from the pillow. Fareeha grabs it with her left, reaching into her lap and threading their fingers together. She places her right hand on the doctor’s shoulder, right above the boundary between skin and blotch, and takes another deep breath. “On the count of three, *habibti*. ”

As soon as her thumb presses down hard over the wing of Angela’s shoulder blade, the doctor lets out a hair-raising shriek, barely muffled by the pillow at all. Her back arches and she shudders as her shriek gives way to pained sobs. Her grip on lover’s hand lessens around two and a half seconds in, much to Fareeha’s relief. The shuddering stops. Angela lifts her head from the pillow with a startled breath.

“It stopped. Did you...are you still...?”

“My thumb is still on you.” Fareeha tries to keep the tremors out of her voice. “The reaction stopped at about two and a half seconds. You had me w-”

“Can we do the compression shirt now?”

Fareeha frowns as she releases her thumb. “That was a lot-”

“I’m okay. Please let’s just get it over with. Before I lose my nerve.”

“You won’t be able to use the pillow. I’ll need your arms up the whole time.” Fareeha insists, shaking. “It’s not going to be just one spot, it’s going to be all of them at once. Like when you woke up.”

“At least I’ll be expecting it this time.” She takes a deep breath, straightening up. “I do still have to attend to my duties today after all. Even if I lay here with you and miss them all, I’d like to at least be comfortable.”

Fareeha can’t figure out how to protest that any better than she already has. “If you’re sure...”

Angela thinks she’s never felt more unsure in her life but she reaches back for Fareeha’s hand anyway and squeezes. “I’ll be fine.”

Chapter End Notes

-Listen. When your butt is big, boxer briefs are so nice. OK, they are so nice. Don’t question me.

-Another short one! I’m so sorry! The next one is really long though :)

-//keeps rubbing hard/soft dichotomy in your faces (sorry, not sorry)

-CONGRATS! I didn’t mean to post this today but here you go! That’s what I get for obsessively editing my draft chapters while I’m sleepy. ./ It’s okay! Just keep in mind that I’m starting back at school tomorrow and updates will be slower as I run out of both pre-written chapters and free time in which to write. :(

Solutions

Chapter Summary

Fareeha and Angela try out Fareeha's solution. Angela tries to fix the mess she's made.

Chapter Notes

I'm so glad y'all are enjoying this! Next update will be by 4/15, with any luck, maybe earlier! I've got two chapters roughed out, plus a Pharmarcy oneshot that's in the works. :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Fareeha breathes in and out, trying to swallow the bile rising in her throat at what she's about to do. She grits her teeth, gets to her knees, and grabs the tank from the countertop. With practiced and mechanical motions, she rolls it up and helps her lover fit her head and arms through it. She's careful to hold it away from the uppermost blotches as she counts to three. On three, she tugs it all the way down in one quick motion, letting it snap in place once she reaches Angela's waist. The effect is as instantaneous as it is brutal, triggering every bundle of nerves at once. Fareeha grips Angela's shoulders while she screams, looking up, counting and praying as the pain runs its course. After five long seconds, it's all passed.

Sucking in a pained breath, Angela bends over, hands on her knees. As her harsh breathing quiets, she's aware of the shaking hands of Fareeha still on her shoulders. She covers them with her own and then carefully turns around. With her sitting and Fareeha on her knees, they're approximately at eye level. The Egyptian's ashen face is still tilted skyward, tears streaming down her cheeks and her lips moving in silent prayer, or perhaps cursing. Angela reaches out and takes her hands from her sides where they'd fallen from her shoulders.

Finally, Fareeha looks down, her wide brown eyes meeting Angela's blue ones. The doctor tries for a smile but her lover's lips are drawn tight, jaw clenched. There isn't a quip in the world she could think of that would take that look away.

"Thank you," she whispers instead, before realizing that her hoarse death croak is not helping. She clears her throat and repeats herself, but Fareeha's breathing is still slow and shallow; her eyes are still wide, fear-stricken.

"I'm okay now. Hey, look at me. You've been amazing. Let me take care of you now, 'Reeha." Angela says softly, running her thumbs over the Egyptian's knuckles. Fareeha slumps, tension bleeding out of shoulders like an open wound. "You've done more than enough for me, you've done enough. You've done everything."

Her brown eyes fill with tears again, threatening to spill over. "Angie--"

"This has been...I've put you through a lot. If you really want to do drills today, you can go. I

won't stop you. But if you don't want to, I can make sure you don't." She tries to smile again but she's still a little stiff. "It's been awhile since I've pulled rank over Winston."

Fareeha closes her eyes, considering. It would only be some flight maneuvers and coverage practice with Tracer and D.Va. If she's being honest with herself, she knows she doesn't want any drills right now. Angela shifts while she thinks, getting to her feet. She watches her tuck the loose edges of the tank into the hem of her sweatpants. The soldier takes the hand that's offered to her, letting the doctor haul her to her feet. A grimace flickers across Angela's face, so she steps back, letting go.

"Not you, love. You're fine. It was just a bump is all." Angela steps gingerly away from the sink corner.

She nods, not completely convinced but honestly, she's too tired to argue. Angela took the reins back and that leaves her with very little to do at this moment; she's slipped back into her caring doctor role and she's not coming out of it anytime soon. Fareeha follows her into the bedroom, flicking off the bathroom light as she goes. She lingers in the doorway.

"Could I have two days actually?" The doctor turns around, eyebrow raised. "Well, a day to sleep and a day to calm down."

"I was going to say I could give you a whole week, *liebe*," Angela replies as she starts to make up the bed for Fareeha, replacing pillows and sheets with ones from her closet shelf. "We made quite the mess, didn't we?"

Fareeha stands awkwardly aside, pretending to examine her calloused brown hands, as Angela zips from the bed to the closet to the hamper with ease. She winces when her love hisses quietly when she bumps her back into the closet knob or walks ramrod straight. She isn't shaking anymore, but the tension is evident. The doctor looks even tinier than usual in the tight compression tank and Fareeha's rolled up sweats, paler in the sunlight streaming through the window. The ways she telegraphs her pain are minuscule but Fareeha couldn't help the concern that bloomed in her chest at the irony of Ms. "show me where it hurts" hiding her discomfort.

"I shouldn't have listened to you." Fareeha mutters bitterly. Only when Angela looked up from the pillow she was fluffing, did she realize she'd said that aloud. She felt the blood drain from her face.

"You didn't do anything wrong. This was my doing, love," she insists softly, even as Fareeha huffs. "I ran into this without knowing anything and I involved you in it out of selfishness. You've paid that price unfairly." She strides over and tilts Fareeha's jaw down so she can look her in the eye once more.

"You did as I asked and more. I just should have been more careful." Angela reddens and withdraws her hand. "And you were quite incredible, unexplained arousal hives aside."

"Is that what we're calling them?" Fareeha raises one bushy black eyebrow.

"Absolutely not. They're unexplained excruciating agony hives now, after all. And when I inevitably have to consult someone else on this ridiculous condition, that's all they'll ever have been." She glances back up at Fareeha to see the small grin growing on her face. "Oh no, you won't. I'll make sure you never get a vacation ever again. Put you on indoor missions for the next 6 months. I'll hide a rotten egg in the Raptora suit, don't think I won't!"

"My lips are sealed, dear doctor." She replies, softly kissing Angela's forehead. "I'd prefer to keep last night between us anyways."

“Good.” She swats gently at her with the pillow and Fareeha follows her back to the bed. Angela lifts the covers, allowing her girlfriend to burrow underneath the covers while she watches, amused.

“Can you make it three days?” She doesn’t even bother to mask the exhaustion in her voice.

“Of course. As long as you need.”

Fareeha yawns, snuggling further into her pillow. “Can we try to cuddle *now* at least?”

“Only if I can lower the blinds a bit.” Fareeha hums in response and watches her lover cross to the other side of the bed out of sight. The room gets just dark enough for a nap. She yawns again as the bed dips and Angela slips under the covers. Fareeha sighs contentedly as the doctor hooks her chin over her shoulder and throws an arm over her stomach.

“Have you ever been the little spoon before?” Angela grumbles as she wiggles to get comfortable and tangles their legs together. “Please tell me this is as novel to you as it is to me.”

“It is.”

Silence. Angela massages the Egyptian’s muscled stomach absentmindedly.

“I might have to leave while you’re asleep.”

“As long as you come back.” She covers Angela’s hand with her own, intertwining their fingers together.

“I always will.”

Chapter End Notes

- remember all that about fareeha not being able to handle causing loved ones pain? it's relevant now. i'm so sorry.
- if you'll take a feels trip with me back to chapter 2, all fareeha originally wanted was to cuddle. poor love. ;w;
- the compression vest provides a constant source of pressure but also acts as a barrier to light contact, such as blankets, but not to concentrated bursts of pressure like a door knob or a hard handpat
- angela has never been the big spoon in her LIFE. fareeha has been the little spoon before but she didn't want to ruin the moment that was a disgruntled pixie trying to cuddle a full grown human. (listen i'm shorter than angela is, i know she's above average height but we're talking about in relation to fareeha okay)
- angela is 5'7" and fareeha is 6'1". that's on my notes at the top of my master draft for this fic, apparently that's not right and fareeha is apparently a bit shorter but the evidence link to that did not lead anywhere so i'm just gonna...stick with my 6-inch height difference, thanks.
- this is the last chapter i'd written when i first started posting this.
- the unexplained agony hives used to have a REAP acronym but i couldn't help the reaper puns so it had to go.

Preparations

Chapter Summary

Angela prepares for a day out and about the Watchpoint.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is not nearly as long as I thought but I'll update again this weekend, no worries!

Thank you for all your support thus far!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Angela waits until Fareeha's breathing has deepened appreciably before asking Athena to patch her through to Winston. She scoots backward, releasing her partner from her embrace, rolls to her front, and pushes up to a sitting position from there. *So far, so good.*

"Good morning, Winston," she chirps amiably as the call connects. "I hope I didn't wake you?"

"A good morning to you, Angela! I was actually going to call you in a bit, but what can I do for you?" The gorilla sounded like he was swallowing hastily. *Probably peanut butter*, she thinks, rolling her eyes. One day, she'd get him to eat properly.

"I'd like to request medical leave for Fareeha. Three days should suffice." She pauses, processing what he'd said. "What were you going to call me for?"

Winston doesn't answer for a few moments.

"Angela, forgive me for saying so, but if Fareeha and you wanted to take a vacation-"

"It's not for me, Winston. Believe me, I mean this genuinely. She needs the rest." Angela couldn't help but be amused at the scientist's assumptions; she was calling from Fareeha's room after all.

"Though if you wouldn't mind limiting my summons to emergencies, at least for today, I would appreciate that as well."

He hums noncommittally. She can almost picture him pushing up his glasses. "Very well. I would like to see the reports of the mission injuries today, if you can do that?"

"Of course. Is that why you were going to call me?"

"Yes, actually. But take your time. I'll keep interruptions to the minimum." She can hear the smile in voice.

Angela fidgets with the edge of Fareeha's comforter. Before she could think too hard about it, she blurts, "Winston, I may need your help with something. Today. If you're not busy."

"I have time, Angela. What can I help you with?"

Shit, I'm losing my nerve. She rubs at her temples. "It's a scientific matter I'd like a second opinion on." *Or a third one, as it were.*

The ape pauses. "Alright...should I be concerned?"

Yes. "No. I just need a different angle, one scientist to another."

"Well, we are both scientists. I look forward to our discussion." Winston responds gamely. "I'll see you later, then?"

"Of course. Bye for now, Winston."

Once the call has disconnected, Angela leans over and kisses Fareeha's cheek gently. She sighs in her sleep and the doctor can't help but feel a little envious. Even knowing that Winston wouldn't patch through every bump, scrape, and papercut, more sleep simply isn't in the cards for Angela. She glances at the bedside clock. It's just after nine. Enough time to get some substantial research in before it was acceptably late enough to go bother Winston.

Angela slips off the bed and pads over to Fareeha's closet, reaching into the back until she grasps the giant teddy bear. She still remembers when she won it for her girlfriend at a carnival on one of their first dates, just weeks after the recall. Even though it was barely a year old, the bear was sort of flattened. She suspected that Fareeha slept with it while she was away on missions but she'd never admit it. Angela thought it was sweet. After all, it is nearly as big as the doctor, a fact that she is sorely reminded of as she lugs it to the bed. Angela tucks it into the spot she's vacated. Not for the first time, she wonders if the giant teddy has a name; not for the first time, she resolves to let Fareeha keep that a secret.

She grabs her phone and keys from her bedside table and tries not to yawn too loudly as she circles the bed once more. On Fareeha's table, inches away from her sleeping face, she finds a notepad. A quick flip through confirms that these are indeed observations from last night. Angela blushes and quietly removes those pages from the notepad, shoving them unceremoniously into her pocket. *These are going straight into lock up.*

She scribbles a quick note to Fareeha on a remaining page and tucks it beneath her phone's charging pad. As an afterthought, she turns the notifications down on her lover's phone; better to let her sleep uninterrupted.

Angela takes one last look around the room. There isn't much else she really needed besides her phone and keys. She closes the door behind her gently and tiptoes across the hallway. There's really no need; the hall is deserted. Despite the fairly late hour, three different strike teams were on that last mission and most of them are likely sleeping in. Athena lets her into her own room with a simple thumbprint scan.

Her room is as she left it a week and a half ago. Her bed is neatly made and there's no clothes strewn about the floor. The grow light for her cactus collection has already turned on for the day; they're content under the harsh light and lack of care, but Angela still mists them with their spray bottle before she forgets. Her garish purple beanbag still has a dent from the last time she took a nap in it. She's not even tempted to approach it; she prefers her spot across the hall.

She tosses her phone and keys on the bed and considers her closet. She's not taking off Fareeha's sweatpants. They're sinfully warm and no one would dare to tease her anyway, even if they are rolled up twice. Angela shifts from foot to foot and rubs her arms, trying to soothe the goosebumps that have risen. Athena's had no reason to regulate her room's temperature; she hasn't been here. The A.I. obliges when she requests it though, turning on the heat gently warm the room.

Looser clothes may be her friend today. The more space between her clothes and the tank, the better. That way, no one touches her. She winces at the mere thought of one of her more touchy feely teammates patting her on the back, only to step back in alarm as she screams...unacceptable. Angela shakes her head, trying to dislodge the thought but it's firmly stuck now. Her chest rises and falls as she breathes one shallow breath after another. Somewhere in the back of her closet, there's a huge sweater of Fareeha's that she can wear. And it's not as if she can't practice her reactions to touch and tame them a bit. Difficult, but not impossible.

Angela squares her shoulders; she just needs to make it to the kitchen, her office, and Winston's lab. Then back to Fareeha's.

Perhaps that is easier said than done.

Chapter End Notes

- Winston's a very smart gorilla! <3
- Lena's in the next chapter! I just love her.. Sombra really piqued my interest in OW but Tracer dragged me in, lmao.
- Are you digging that cactus collection? Me too. After writing that bit, I started churning out a oneshot about Fareeha, Angela, and plants. That'll be out soon.
- I love your comments!!!! I live for them ;u;

Breakfast

Chapter Summary

All Angela wanted was to make breakfast.

Chapter Notes

Lookie loo, an extra long chapter, just for you! Thank you so much for all the hits and kudos thus far! I also love chatting with y'all through comments too :)
As a heads up, there's this chapter and two more standing between me and Angela's wings; get excited :D
Eventually, I'm gonna get into the plants-related oneshot but it's on the back burner for now.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Lena stumbles into the kitchen yawning, Angela is scraping an omelette into a heat-keeping tin. She greets her with a simple “hello”. The time traveller cradles her RAF mug in both hands, its distinctive and peculiar shade of blue clashing with the loud yellow of her turtle neck. Her accelerator’s leg straps hang loosely at her sides of her jean capris, but the device was otherwise securely strapped to her chest and beaming brightly. She raises an eyebrow at Angela who clearly isn’t wearing a shred of her own clothing.

“Cor, you look like you’re swimming in that!” Lena giggles, crossing the kitchen in three short strides. She reaches for the coffee pot but Angela plucks it out of her reach.

“Lena, how many cups have you had? It’s nearly ten.”

“Not even one, doc! I slept late. No need to ration the caffeine, jeez.” Lena reaches up and pushes her hair back with a smile.

“You wouldn’t be the first one on that ration list,” Angela gripes, but fills her mug without any further prompting. She closes the tin and turns down the stove heat for another dish.

“Oi, you’re worse than Em. She’s always going on about caffeine addictions and all that but some of us need it to survive, okay?” Lena grimaces before taking a long gulp. Angela frowns, perplexed, as she retroactively adds milk and sugar cubes to the mug.

“Angie, you alright? You’re looking a bit puffy this morning,” says Lena, leaning back against the counter.

“Why didn’t you add sugar and milk before you drank it?”

“Maximum caffeine intake, Angie, we’ve been over this.” She sips at the diluted coffee. “You didn’t actually answer my question, though?”

Angela sighs. “The onions, Lena. Not everything is worth concern...but thank you.”

The brit glances down at the pile of raw vegetables sauteing in the pan, onions among them and then looks back up at Angela's reddened eyes and puffy lids. A retort nearly slips out but she purses her lips instead and drinks more of her coffee. She watches quietly as the doctor scrambles more eggs and starts a mess of hash browns in another pan. It's like watching a stretched rubber band; even in clothes far too big for her, Lena can see that Angela's standing ramrod straight, moving gingerly without her usual quick grace.

"Ange."

She hums in response, absently pressing the hashbrowns with a spatula.

"Is Fareeha okay?"

Angela's brow furrows as she glances over at Lena who meets her gaze evenly.

"Yes," she replies slowly. "Fareeha is fine. I just had a rough night, Lena."

"Oh okay! Sorry, I didn't mean to pry, Angie! You're always looking after everyone else after all. I just wanted to make sure--"

"That's sweet of you, Lena." Angela smiles as she stirs the beaten eggs into the veggies. Lena sheepishly rubs a hand through her messy hair and sets her mug back on the counter. The Swiss watches bemused as she hops onto the counter and starts rummaging in the jar of packaged tea bags on top of the fridge.

"I think it's the caffeine in black tea that gets rid of puffy lids? You'd know more about that, I guess."

"Well yes, it's a vasoconstrictor, closes your blood vessels. I'd heard about it." The probing questions have passed; she relaxes, flipping the hash brown patties and stirring the eggs a bit. She beats another couple eggs and throws them into the pan. After the night she had, Angela decides to indulge herself as she throws pepper, basil, and rosemary into the mix. While her own soy chorizo is sizzling, she's thinking about whether Fareeha will want turkey sausage or turkey bacon when Lena pipes up again.

"You'll look a bit silly with tea bags on your eyes but take a nap for a bit! No one will be any the wiser! Aha, here's a couple!" Lena crows as she pivots one knee to show Angela her prize. Her expression slides from triumphant to horrified as the skin of her kneecap keeps sliding, aided by the produce bag from the onions, and she loses her balance.

In a half-second, Angela considers. No, she cannot let Lena get hurt. She has to break her fall or else Lena'll break something, herself or perhaps something on the stove. Even if she does recall, there's no telling as to when she'll do so. If she falls and gets too disoriented, she might not recall at all. No, Angela has to catch her. But how? Lena may be shorter than her but she's no featherweight. The most she going to be able to do is break her fall. Front or back? Accelerator hitting her back would be awful, too concentrated. The most she can hope for is the wall or the floor quickly shorting out the nerves.

Angela reacts, taking a step forward and putting her arms out to catch Lena as she falls. The back of the Brit's accelerator hits her squarely in the sternum and her momentum throws them both backwards. Before they fall too far together, Lena rewinds, ending up back on the counter with the tea pinched tight between her fingers. Angela, on the other hand, tries to correct for the lack of weight by throwing her left leg backward for balance, but she slips on the hem of her sweatpants. Now she's in even more free-fall than she originally accounted for and frantically windmilling backward. She slams into the wall behind her with a sharp yelp and uses the remainder of the

momentum to lurch forward. With her hands braced against the wall, she struggles to breathe through her nose as she bites her lip until it bleeds.

Lena watches all of this in horror as Angela softly, quietly keeps herself from crying out. She doesn't notice Lena's expression; her eyes are screwed shut as her thoughts bounce rapidly in her mind: *wait it out, don't scream, keep breathing, don't lean back, don't scream, don't scre-*

"Angie? Angela!" Lena scrambles down from the counter, carefully this time. She hesitates before putting a gentle hand on the blonde's knee. Angela takes a deep breath as the last aftershocks fade into a dull ache. She finds Lena's concerned brown eyes searching her own and can't help but wish there was a different pair of brown eyes witnessing this mess.

"I'm alright." Angela whispers. She licks her lip, wiping away the blood that's pooled there. The metallic tang brings her back to her senses. One of the pans has begun to smoke. "Lena, the hash browns."

Lena looks ready to murder her for putting *hash browns* over her own well-being, but she gets to her feet, dutifully flips the hash browns, stirs the scrambled eggs, turns on the exhaust fan, and turns off the stove top, moving the pans from their hot ranges. While she does this, Angela pushes off from the wall and gets her legs underneath her. Despite everything, she's terribly pleased with her reaction.

"I'm a bit winded, that's all," she says when Lena helps her to her feet. "Should have expected you to rewind, but I didn't want to just let you fall."

"And I shouldn't have climbed on the counter," Lena groans in response. "Are you sure you're alright? You didn't bash your head in, did you?"

Angela runs her fingers through the back of her hair, gently massaging her scalp with her fingertips. Nothing stings so she shakes her head. Lena exhales, relieved.

Satisfied with her quick checkup, Angela turns her attention back to her breakfast. Eating in the kitchen is no longer desirable if only to avoid having to suppress her reactions twice. If Lena's awake, other's are too. No reason to tempt fate. Angela puts her plate back in cabinet and rummages around until she finds another takeaway tupperware in which to slide half the hash browns and the enormous serving of scrambled eggs. She grabs some turkey links from the freezer and throws them into the pan. Her stomach grumbles loudly at the scents wafting from the pans.

"Lena, can you put some English muffins in the toaster?" Lena startles from where she's been standing, nervously sipping at her coffee.

"Sure thing!"

Angela grabs the shredded cheese from the door as Lena rummages in the fridge with one hand. Within fifteen minutes, Fareeha's tin's full of a muffin, omelette, hash browns and a couple of sausages. Angela's on the other hand has 4 scrambled eggs, a heaping of soy chorizo, hash browns and a muffin. Lena raises an eyebrow as she struggles to close the tupperware but otherwise doesn't say anything until she starts to tidy up.

"I can take care of the dishes, Angela!" says Lena, as she reaches for the dish soap. Angela pauses. "Really, go have breakfast with 'Reeha!"

Angela smiles. "That's kind of you, thank you. I'll see you later, Lena."

She pads out of the kitchen, gingerly balancing the tupperwares and two cups of orange juice as the sounds of the faucet and pans fades behind her. Ana passes her in the hallway; they murmur

good morning to one another. The sniper gives her a knowing smile when she notices Angela's cargo. She blushes. Thankfully she doesn't meet anyone else. Thankfully, Athena accepts her pinky fingerprint- it's the only finger that's not in the balancing act- and lets her back into Fareeha's room. The scent of her jasmine fabric softener fills her nostrils as her eyes slowly adjust to the dim lighting. Angela huffs out a soft laugh as she approaches the bed. Sometime in the last two hours, her girlfriend's rolled over to cuddle the bear. She quietly places the heat keeping tin and orange juice on the bedside table but the soft clink they make has Fareeha stirring in her sleep. Angela bends over to give her a kiss on the cheek.

"Come back to bed," Fareeha whispers sleepily, her eyelashes fluttering. Angela winces as she notices the same puffiness under her eyes that Lena had pointed out under her own eyes.

"Not yet," Angela sighs. She straightens up and takes one of the tea bags from her pocket and scribbles instructions under her earlier note. Fareeha grumbles sleepily and cuddles closer to the bear.

As she tiptoes back to the door, Fareeha murmurs, "But Teddiursa doesn't like me as much as you do."

Angela's heart shatters. She stares at the ceiling until she can respond without any tremors in her voice.

"But of course. No one loves you as much as I do."

Fareeha only sighs. Angela leaves without another word, quietly closing the door behind her. She takes a deep breath.

Next stop, the med bay.

Chapter End Notes

-RETCON- Angela's a vegetarian. Fareeha's not. If you read chapter 9 prior to this change, she had sausages in her breakfast. Now she has soy chorizo. Sorry I was brainstorming today and realized it was a plot point. (4/20/17)

-I've got beef with the field (flag term for background) of the RAF flag. I looked it up and I don't like it. It's off somehow. Google it! It's like a dull teal. Yeuch...

-Lena's one of my favorite characters and I love writing her! I'm...a wannabe Tracer main. Figures a newbie with no FPS experience would pick on one of the most difficult and squishiest characters to main but listen...I am determined to become a Tracer that is the bane of the enemy team. Just as soon as I stop blowing myself up with my own pulse bombs...DX

-I play Symbracerio.. I just coined that. I'm so sorry. I play exactly 4 characters right now although I've gotten passably good at Rein on the Uprising event! I've gotta learn Mercy so I can get the 'play all 4 characters' achievement. I ended up playing Torb on the first run through and only survived because one of my best friends coached me the whole time. Same with Rein actually, I didn't know what the fuck I was doing XD If you ever play with Kinaesthetic, friend me! I'll post my specific code later; I'm not on the right computer atm to check what it is.

-I know Lena's British but she's a coffee addict in the morning. Also, yes, she's dating Emily in this. ouo

-Lena "Some people????? drink pots of coffee???? to cope?????????"

-In case Lena was unclear, she pours a full cup of black coffee, drinks a thirdish of it and then make sit to her liking, just so she gets a full cup of coffee in her system.

-A sentence I added into last chapter retroactively to make things make a bit more sense: “Not for the first time, she wonders if the giant teddy has a name; not for the first time, she resolves to let Fareeha keep that a secret.”

-Reinhardt introduced Fareeha to Pokemon by accident??? Or maybe Ana had an ancient 3DS that she gave her. Maybe Lena had an album of pokemon cards??? I don't know who got tiny 'Reeha into pokemon but it happened. She keeps it on the downlow but she used to play a lot when she was younger.

-I hope this was as delightfully painful for you to read as it was for me to write.

-Teaser for the next chapter, (from my notes, not the story:) “Angela threatens to shove the caduceus staff so far up Fareeha's ass that it'll heal the hickies on her neck.”

LMAO

Medical Mystery

Chapter Summary

Angela searches for answers.

Chapter Notes

so the two chapters standing between me and angies wings is now three because this chapter was getting long and it's getting late in the day, so i wanted to give y'all what i have so far. :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Angela takes the back way to the med bay, devouring both halves of her English muffin as she walks. She manages to leave a mess of crumbs on Fareeha's sweater and get some jam on her nose as she does so. She only notices this as she approaches the med bay door and sees her reflection in the glass window. Lena had been generous. Food mess aside, she looks like shit, even by her own standards.

Her eyes aren't just puffy, they're swollen. There's an ugly split down her lip from where she'd been biting it and it's still bleeding sluggishly. Her hair is flyaway, barely kept in the ponytail she's thrown it in. Her cheeks are aflame and...is her nose dripping?

Ew.

She fishes her keys out of her pocket and unlocks the med bay. Toeing the door shut and locking it behind her, she strides over to her office. The med bay's polished chrome and crisp clean linens are blinding all on their own, so she doesn't bother turning on any lights. It's not until she's unlocked her office that she flicks her finger over any light switches.

She breathes out a gentle sigh, taking in the calm of her office. Everything was as she'd left it last night, pristine and well-organized. Sharp beams of sunlight cut the tile into slices of light and tile. It's blinding until the ceiling light warms up and bathes everything in the same harsh fluorescence. She places her mostly full tupperware on the edge of her desk and addressed the ceiling.

"Athena, engage confidentiality configuration."

"Of course, Dr. Ziegler." Athena says serenely. The blinds over the window and the door slide shut. Angela takes a moment to breathe as the door locks behind her with a gentle click.

"How are you this morning, Dr. Ziegler?" Athena inquires, sensors following her as she moves toward her desk drawers. Her tone is two shades past polite and edging into concern.

Angela pauses where she is twisting the key in the lock.

"Athena..." Her voice is a warning wrapped in curious tones. Athena's sensors blink and dim demurely.

“I had a reminder to open an offline drive when you reentered office alone. Last night, I was clearly concerned about your health enough to circumvent certain protocols to ensure I would have the opportunity to check on you since you were keen on not doing so.”

The doctor crosses her arms and glares toward the black hemisphere in the ceiling. The A.I.’s sensors sweep back and forth as if she is avoiding her gaze.

“You’re a piece of work.” Angela huffs. She can’t maintain the irritation in her voice. Honestly, it was a good idea. Her sketches did not include any of the metadata that Athena’s saved scans could provide.

“Technically I did not break Dory protocol.”

“You did well, Athena. Just tell me next time.”

“Of course, Dr. Ziegler. It displeases me to deceive you.” The A.I. pauses before asking again, “And how are you?”

Angela looks up from where she’s examining yesterday’s medical sheet. “Worse. Not good.”

Athena waits for her to elaborate. Out of habit, Angela engages Dory protocol before launching into a detailed explanation of things that happened since she left the med bay the night before. She skims over the more private parts, focusing mostly the developments of the morning. It’s not until she gets to her own investigations that Athena interrupts.

“Dr. Ziegler, correct me if I’m wrong, but it sounds as if you induced this pain response on purpose? Without any supervision?”

She fiddles with her ponytail. “Well, of course, it’s not as if I could have asked anyone—”

“Dr. Ziegler, that is unacceptably irresponsible of you. What if something had gone wrong?”

Angela sighs. Shutting her bathroom door and poking at her back with a back scratcher until she was reasonably sure she would not scream at the slightest distinguished touch? Effective, but perhaps not the safest. The pain had not gotten more manageable, but she’s conditioned herself to react better. Passing out had not been concern she allowed herself.

“It was necessary, Athena. Such a response would not have hardly been appropriate in common spaces.”

“Dr. Ziegler, the Overwatch team is meant to support each other. Your status as a healer does not exempt you from the concern of your teammates and your health—”

“Is my own private business!” Angela snaps back, then immediately flinches at her own tone. Athena’s sensors flare briefly before dimming again.

“My apologies, Dr. Ziegler—”

“No. No, Athena, I should be the one apologizing. You’re right. I shouldn’t be doing this by myself. I’m sorry I shouted at you.” She unclenches her hands, releasing her grip on her papers. The wrinkles hardly smooth out as runs her hands over them. Her hands are shaking so badly that she stops fiddling with them. Angela sucks in a breath and releases it in a ragged sigh. When she finally speaks again, she can’t be bothered to pitch her voice above a whisper.

“It has been a long time since I have felt pain like this, Athena.”

“With the specifications of the Valkyrie, I imagine it has been, Dr. Ziegler. However, I do not believe your suit can fix this; it seems to be the cause of the issue.”

Angela pushes her bangs back and looks up at Athena once more.

“Can you do another few scans for me?”

“Of course.”

The young doctor steps around the desk and stands in the middle of the room. She shuts her eyes, but the scan’s light persists, shining through to the back of her eyelids like a flashbang.

An injured healer is no good. The Valkyrie doesn’t allow it. It’s been years, a decade, nearly two. When was the last time I’ve felt pain like this?

Ah. Before I installed the med-port. Of course, the frag grenade. She resists the urge to pass her hands over her stomach, to remind herself that the gaping holes in her abdomen had healed long ago. Andreas-the young leader of the unit- did not realize know the bastion unit would spot them at the last second, did not know about its second eye. Even though he caught the full blast of the deflected bomb, she’d caught enough shrapnel to leave her slipping in and out of consciousness, unable to keep Andreas alive long enough for backup to arrive.

Pain is a distraction that gets others killed.

“Here are the scans from yesterday and today, Dr. Ziegler.”

Shaking her head, Angela opens her eyes, smooths out the front of her sweater, and takes a look at the projected miniature holograms. She skips past the full body and anterior scans. On the posterior scan, Athena’s highlighted the abrasions in yellow, a sharp contrast against the blue of the hologram.

“It’s spreading like an infection.” She marvels at the way the blotches have expanded toward each other, like bacterial colonies in a petri dish. She compares the two sets of scans with growing interest before she snaps out of it. This is on her back, not an episode of Mystery Diagnosis or E.R. Cases from Hell.

She recoils slightly at this realization. “Athena, can you tell when this happened?”

She holds still as Athena flashes her sensors at her back again for a few seconds.

“Recently, perhaps in the last two hours.”

I made it worse.

“Ah dear. Well, you were right after all,” she chuckles bitterly. “I shouldn’t have gone poking at them.”

“I suppose you performed your trials approximately two hours ago?”

“Yes, saying nothing of my kitchen...misadventures.” When Athena doesn’t respond, she realizes she never got that far in her tale. “I fell flat against a wall trying to catch Lena.”

There’s another brief pause as Athena consults her security footage. “I see. That may have aggravated the issue.”

Angela rolls her eyes and waves away yesterday's scans. She has to admit, it’s much easier to

examine the issue with the digital aid. "Athena, can you take a cross section of them?"

They continue in this fashion for some time- the A.I. performing scans and the doctor examining them. When they exhaust that way of investigating, Angela retreats to her desk and begins external research. By lunchtime, she's surrounded by several medical texts. Her holo projects a dozen screens of different medical journals. She's long since moved from her medical sheets to her own notebook, filling pages with observations of her own, as well as the more pertinent parts of Fareeha's and notes from her research. Distantly, she registers her phone vibrating but it isn't until it buzzes several times in quick succession that she starts looking for it. It's buried under two textbooks and her medical folder because of course, it is.

21 unread messages

11:57 am thanks for breakfast, woke up ravenous

12:30 pm did i dream you coming in and talking to me

12:33 pm did i say something embarrassing

12:43 pm also teddi is not allowed to sub for you when you could actually be in bed

12:44 pm how long have u known?????

12:44 pm wait don't answer that

12:45 pm im fine pretending u still don't know

1:09 pm what kind of 32yo sleeps with a stuffed animal. Not me no sir

1:11 pm oh wait the kind whose gf can't stick around in the morning thought we made it past that part of the relationship angie wtf

1:12 pmthis is all in jest ofc

1:15 pm im going on a run, in case you come looking for me

1:58 pm ur nose is either buried in a book or ur mad at me

1:59 pm full offense im gonna with the former r u researching the UEAH

1:59 pm that's a dumb acronym jsyk do better

2:32 pm aaaaaaaaaannnnnnggggeeeeeeeeeeeeeellllaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

2:32 pm angie

2:32 pm a n g e l a

2:32 pm paging Dr. Ziegler~

2:33 pm angie, my tiny pixie gremlin gf aka delight in bed and force of nature on the field aka light of my heart

2:33 pm angela!

She blinks in alarm at the timestamp, looking around the room to see only the timeless harshness of the fluorescent lights. *Where did the day go?*

sorry Reeha lost track of time **2:34 pm**

As usual **2:34 pm**

I am working sorry **2:35 pm**

Wanna get take out tonight? I'll be back around dinner time **2:35 pm**

2:36 pm finallyyyyyy that sounds great can we get swagatam how are youuuuuuu

Doing okay, ready to eat my weight in samosas **2:36 pm**

Angela texts with one hand and reaches out for her forgotten breakfast. It's cold; she makes a face and debates the merits of eating her rubbery eggs and soggy hash browns, or covering everything in salsa and warming it up again.

2:36 pm that won't be very many samosas ;P

Haha. I need to meet with Winston. Hopefully, that won't take long. **2:36 pm**

2:37 pm a short meeting with Winston? don't hold your breath

Well I need to discuss the situation with him so I suppose it may take a while **2:37 pm**

2:37 pm The Situation™?

Angela rolls her eyes.

Yes, silly. **2:37 pm**

2:40 pm thanks for not keeping this to urself angie

2:41 pm i know it's not easy

She doesn't really know how to answer that without being sarcastic.

2:42 pm don't get sappy ur gonna ruin it

Wouldn't dream of it. I'll be back before you know it **2:42 pm**

Angela watches her phone for a few minutes. When Fareeha doesn't respond, she stands and stretches. She stops with a gasp as she arches too far backward and her back protests.

"Dr. Ziegler?"

"I'm fine, Athena. I've just been hunched over for too long and I think that's enough for one day." She straightens up and begins placing bookmarks in the texts littering her desks, closing and stacking them. By the time she's gathered her papers and put them back in the draw, it's a few minutes past three.

"Athena, would you mind keeping my scans and research in an offline database?"

“Not at all, Dr. Ziegler. I will do the same as yesterday.”

“Excellent.” Angela turns to the wall of drawers behind her and begins to gather the medical reports for Winston to peruse. When she turns back to the desk, her research articles are gone and her holo dormant. She pats her pockets and fills them with her phone and keys again. Thinking of the tea bag, she ambles over to her sink and checks in the mirror. Earlier she was a wreck; now she just looks tired. Her puffy eyes have deflated and her face has returned to her natural pale shade. She splashes water on her face, dries off, then applies a transparent band-aid to her lip. Her hair cooperates better when her hands are wet, so she redoes her ponytail and combs her fingers through her bangs. She almost looks presentable.

“Disengage Dory protocol, Athena.”

“Dory protocol disengaged, Dr. Ziegler.”

Angela gathers up the folder of reports and her journal before sticking a pencil behind her ear.

“Let Winston know I’ll be over to his lab in half an hour please.”

“Of course.”

Her stomach growls as she grabs the tupperware and hurries out of the office. She won’t be putting work before food this time.

Chapter End Notes

- more set up filter. hope y'all don't mind
- finally the question of what angela did to keep her reactions undercontrol is answered
- angela is secretly relieved to have athena looking out for her
- swagatam is an indian cuisine restarant in barcelona, ESP. i picked a random one nearer gilbraltar (ie not in my collegetown) bc i didn't want to use a local one. aside from being delicious, indian food has lots of vegetarian and non-veg options which i really appreciate as a picky meat eater. i'm this close to getting some tonight but i need to restrain myself
- winston is known for being long winded. he has a big brain and he's doing his best okay.
- fareeha uses all lowercase and no punctuation bc angela gets what she means regardless
- angela uses proper grammar and punctuation because she writes to many essays and needs to lighten up

Conversations

Chapter Summary

Angela meets with Winston and argues with Fareeha.

Chapter Notes

Hi y'all! I'm so sorry for the wait! Not only was my week super busy, but writing this chapter was THE WORST. I don't know if it was Winston or Angela but I felt super out of touch with the Angela I've developed so far and was working super hard to keep her true to what I've written.. It took a four-hour bus ride to really hammer out this chapter and 85% of the next one. I'm suffering trying to get to these wings, gah. Enjoy 2000+ words of suffering of various types!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Angela sits at the counter, one hand in her bangs and the other hard at work on some designs for a back brace. Her bowl- once full of what she'd affectionately dubbed a breakfast burrito bowl- sits empty on the counter. It doesn't stop her from glancing up at it wistfully every ten seconds, as if something might appear in it. After reheating the remains of her breakfast and adding a generous helping of salsa and a cup of Jesse's free-for-all guacamole -he always makes too much-, she might have eaten a little too fast. That's why her stomach is still growling. *Right?*

She shifts uncomfortably on the barstool. The breakfast bar between the main kitchen and the dining area is seldom taken advantage of, but for the last 20 minutes, Angela's made good use of it. She's safe from everyone on her perch in the corner, her backs to the wall, she's leaning over the rounded corner of the counter. No one can get behind her unless they pass through her line of sight. She's safe.

Except now she has to head to Winston's lab and, unlike her own, there isn't really a back way to get to it. The kitchen may have been deserted at this hour but the base is as populated as possible, with every member of the team back. After lunch, most people tended to nap or spar, but well, Angela hasn't had luck her side today. She's preparing for the worst.

Nine minutes to get to the lab now. Angela hops off the stool and takes her bowl to the sink to wash up. No one interrupts her, no one enters the kitchen and she leaves without incident, taking her notebook and folders with her. Her thoughts keep bringing her to open her notebook and then she closes it just as quickly.

Concentrate, Angela!

Thankfully, she bumps into no one. Winston's lab door swings open with a gentle push of her foot. For once, it's brightly lit and Winston is at his computer, chewing thoughtfully on a mango. Angela spots the bowl of fruit by his side and is relieved to find it's not completely full of bananas. There's still a jar of peanut butter at hand, but baby steps are better than none.

“Winston?”

“Ah, Angela! Thank you for coming in!” He follows her gaze to the peanut butter and grins sheepishly. “Don’t start! I know, I know.”

“I wasn’t actually going to say anything.” She takes a seat in one of the swivel chairs reserved for his human visitors, spinning it until she can comfortably lean over the backrest. Waving the folder in her hand, she presents it to the gorilla, who takes it carefully.

“Was anyone seriously injured?”

“No, not terribly. Jesse took a bad tumble and damaged his kneecap, but I fixed it on the field. Lena stayed out of trouble. Zarya sprained an ankle jumping entirely too far down and then didn’t tell me until we holed up for the second night. Honestly,” she says, dropping her voice to a conspiratorial whisper, “I’m glad Genji was back at base because dealing with him as well would have doubled the nightmare.”

Winston chuckles and Angela joins in with a light giggle of her own. It takes a little less than an hour to go over her training recommendations and proposed strike team reconfigurations. She tries to be as detailed as possible; any configurations that would reduce injuries, recovery, and physical therapy are constantly on her mind.

“As thorough as always, Angela,” says Winston, handing the folder back. “Thank you for making it down here today. I’m glad to hear the injuries weren’t too bad this time around. Between that and Jack’s report, we seem to have done well. Now, you mentioned needing a second opinion on something?”

She freezes from where she’d been tucking the folder between the seatback and her chest, her other hand tightening on the journal. Of course Winston can be trusted, of course, he’d never compromise her or the suit or its secrets. Nervously licking her lips as Winston raises his eyebrows expectantly, Angela opens the journal and tears her sketch out before she can think too hard about it.

“Yes, could you help make me a back brace that doesn’t touch my back? The Valkyrie suit seems to have conditioned my back muscles to tense when they’re pressed up against something. It’s becoming difficult to sleep.” She hands him the sketch. Winston adjusts his glasses and examines the paper.

“Looks relatively simple. A couple of straps around the upper arm, an arc of metal banding to keep the plate away from your back. Another strap around your waist. I could have a prototype in an hour. This is a well-thought out design, but I was under the impression you wanted my opinion, not my engineering skills?”

Angela freezes again but recovers quickly, hiding her panic with a sheepish grin. “Well yes, but I ended up doing research all afternoon and reaching my own conclusions. You’re looking at the results of my labor there.”

“I see.” The apple he crams into his mouth does very little to muffle his disappointed tone and Angela wishes for a second that she hadn’t lied. Only for a second though. “Well, let Athena scan your dimensions then.”

The young doctor stays with Winston as he works, happily listening to him ramble on about his latest experiments, from innovation in Hana’s mech to Lena’s accelerator, and personal projects, like a submarine that he could comfortably fit in. They pass forty-five minutes in this way before the gorilla presents her with the vest. It fits what Angela has drawn to a tee, albeit improved with a

front zipper. She beams as she examines it, turning it this way and that. Winston really did have a talent for welding, even on something so relatively small.

“It should fit perfectly. Would you like to try it on?”

“Oh no, worries, Winston! I trust you. This is beautiful work, really. Plus, I’ve got a compression top on, though you probably can’t tell,” she says with a small laugh, gesturing at the huge sweater. “It’ll be hell to take off-” They both startle at the buzzing sound from Angela’s pocket.

5:17pm ur late

5:17pm im wounded

5:17pm cant believe ur leaving me for winston

She lets out a sigh of relief although Winston probably hears it as annoyed one. “That’ll be Fareeha. I promised her Swagatam tonight. Want me to get you anything?”

Winston raises an eyebrow.

“They serve vegetables!” Angela sputters indignantly while Winston roars with laughter.

“I’m quite alright, Angela. Please enjoy your dinner and give Fareeha my best wishes. Let me know if the turtle shell gives you any trouble.”

Angela snorts. *Turtle shell, of course.*

- - -

When Angela opens Fareeha’s door, she’s lounging in her armchair, finishing up her novel from last night. It doesn’t take long for her to realize why the Egyptian is wearing a turtleneck in spite of the Gibraltar June. She tosses the turtle shell on the bed and saunters over, grinning.

“Tell me you didn’t go for a run in that? Wouldn’t that have been more obvious?”

Fareeha smirks. “Are you sure you remember last night? I am *not* dealing with our nosy team, not to mention my mother. Besides I’m used to the heat, unlike you.”

Angela laughs and flaps her hands impatiently, shooing Fareeha’s novel and hands out of her lap until she can take their place. The smaller woman tucks herself in the space against Fareeha, wrapping her arms around the soldier.

“Hey, no fair,” she whines, unsure of where she can put her hands. Eventually, she tangles them in Angela’s hair, stroking softly as they cuddle. They sit like that for a minute before Fareeha’s curiosity gets the better of her.

“So, what’d you do today?”

“Tried to figure this out,” responds the doctor, tapping her lover’s back to indicate her own. “My theory is that they’re middle stage blisters, like when you burn yourself? The skin on top is dying, and there’s an inflammation response happening underneath, so this morning there’s more lymph fluid. And it seems to be spreading but only in response to pain. They’ve expanded since yesterday; I had a mishap this morning. But in a way that makes some sense. Kind of like picking at a scar-interrupting the process of healing is likely to make it worse.”

Fareeha hums, trying to follow. “That doesn’t really explain last night, *habibti*. ”

“You’re assuming I’m going to even try to explain last night.”

“Fair. And Winston?”

Angela snuggles closer. “He made me a turtle shell so I can sleep.”

“Uh, I guess I’ll see that later. But I mean what was his theory? He’s no doctor, but I’m sure he had his own ideas?”

Angela blinks and pulls back from Fareeha, who raises an eyebrow expectantly.

“Um…”

Fareeha pulls her hands back from Angela’s hair and massages her temple in frustration. “I thought you said—“

“I never said—”

“Angie, this is not something you can keep a secret. You’re in pain! This isn’t a harmless side effect that you can ignore!”

“I’m not, I’m working on it with Athena!”

“Athena’s not a doctor!”

“Neither is Winston!” She shoots back, looking everywhere but her girlfriend’s eyes.

“He’s more qualified than anyone else on this base to *at least provide an opinion!*”

The blonde doesn’t answer. She looks out of the window behind Fareeha instead and bites her lip.

“If it were anyone else—“

“I’d be taking care of them.” Angela snaps, hopping out of Fareeha’s lap. “I’m my own best option, Fareeha. I know this already. Winston is *not* an acceptable alternative for me!”

“Neither is Athena!”

“Athena’s fucking stubborn; She wouldn’t be involved if I could help it.”

“Oh, and I’m just a coincidence, I suppose!” Fareeha sucks in a breath, refusing to feel bad for that, and plows on. “You don’t get to make me the only one who knows when it all goes wrong! This isn’t a scratch or a weird bruise. You already told me Athena can’t figure out what the deal is but yet you’re too stubborn to ask for a teeny tiny bit of help!”

“He knows the Valkyrie’s causing my back muscles to act up! I told him that much; I’m not going to explain this until I know more!” She stays planted squarely as Fareeha gets to her feet but she stays where she is; Angela doesn’t have to look up too much.

“Angie,” starts Fareeha, much softer than the argument so far. “That’s not good enough.”

“It is for now!” counters the Swiss but she follows the lead and doesn’t shout.

“If you won’t tell him—“

“Oh no, you won’t,” hisses Angela, stepping closer. “You tell him and I’ll jab the Cad so far up your ass it’ll heal your hickies, don’t think I won’t do it!”

In the stunned silence that follows, Fareeha begins to grin at the blushing smaller woman staring up at her. She lets out a low whistle.

“Don’t—” Angela groans.

“Sounds kinky, doctor.” The Egyptian laughs as the blonde buries her face in her hands.

“You know what I meant!”

Fareeha laughs harder at the very unthreatening woman in front of her. “You can’t bully me into not caring about you, Angie.”

“I know, I’m sorry.” She pauses while her girlfriend grows quiet. “You’re just trying to help. I’m being an ass.”

“You’re scared.” Angela flinches, confirming this. “I’m scared too. I guess I’m so used to you being a know-it-all; it’s like, wow, how is the great Angela Ziegler stumped?”

“Didn’t you know? She can fix everyone but herself,” the doctor in question responds bitterly.

“Hey, no, stop that!” Fareeha says sharply but the hands she uses to uncover Angela’s face are gentle. “If you want to throw a pity party, go to your own room.”

Brown eyes meet blue ones and Angela sighs. “I’m sorry, Fareeha. Sure, I’m scared but I can’t explain this. I tried. I barely know what’s going on.”

“Can you promise me to talk to him when you get half an idea of what’s going on?”

Angela exhales, worrying her lip. “If it gets worse or I start to get 50% sure of what’s going on, I will tell Winston everything from this morning until the present day, regarding my back.”

“Thank you.” Fareeha squeezes Angela’s hands ever so gently.

Angela buries her face in Fareeha’s chest, hugging her tight. “I don’t mean to worry you.”

“I know you don’t *mean* to, *habibti*. Doesn’t make it happen any less.”

They stand in Fareeha’s room, enjoying each other’s embrace until Angela’s stomach begins to protest.

“I’m buying tonight.” She hears Fareeha breathe in to speak. “Nope, no more arguing. I’m *starving*. ”

Chapter End Notes

-Jesse can cook. Sometimes he gets the portions multiplication wrong, but the cowboy can cook.

-I'm sorry but it's so funny that Genji "I need healing" Shimada is the bane of every support ever. Except for Symmetra, lmao. //takes a seat hey blizz, if sym puts turrets around a health pack, let her get healing points every time the enemy can't get to it ;P
-developing a texting style for Angela and Fareeha gave me flashbacks to Homestuck RPing which was honestly an enjoyable part of that chapter in my life. for reference,

Fareeha uses punctuation sparingly and no caps- she turned off autocaps on her phone. She likes using ur and u for ironic purposes and for affection; also bc Angela can sometimes revert to being a grammar purist and it reminds her not to be an asshole about grammar. (English isn't Angela's 1st language; she learned it in school. Since she's a perfectionist, she used to be a little snotty when it comes to grammar but then Ana (and probably OW members tbh) reminded her that English grammar serves the interests of colonial empires and also correcting grammar is just like rude??? :) So she doesn't shit on people for English grammar anymore (she was a kid then tbh) but she still uses it as she was taught bc still perfectionist. Angela uses caps and "proper" punctuation like an academic paper, even when she's drunk. fuckin nerd.

-i was raised in a very grammar purist environment but I'm growing out of it ;u; sorry i have a lot of feelings

-im yelling a lot about Winston's diet bc trying to research gorilla diet is not a good thing i'm good at. pb is a good source of protein and probably replaces the partly insect diet that they have but i'm just having a hard time with the logistics of it. Sorry big guy!

-Angela knows she the shit, has known for a long time. This is accepted as an implicit fact and the fact that Fareeha challenges that pisses her off more than she expected.

No one questions Dr. Angela Ziegler Ph.D.x4, inventor and innovator extraordinaire. Basically, Angela's the shit but also a little shit. :/

-finally the cad staff line makes an appearance XD

-Angela isn't sure why Fareeha puts up with her. Fareeha wonders the same about Angela, albeit less frequently.

Fareeha's Journal

Chapter Summary

Fareeha continues taking notes on Angela's condition because Angela refuses to let anyone else know exactly what's going on.

"Angie, you may a stubborn fuck, but you're my stubborn fuck. Makes you my problem."

Chapter Notes

I really wanted to give y'all this chapter earlier this week because I had time to finish it, but I am SO glad I didn't. Trust me, you are too, even if you don't know what I changed. I'll be posting the next chapter shortly! That one got out of hand....in a good way....but still

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sunday, June 12

Well, I've looked everywhere these notes are gone forever. Angie must have taken them; she's probably hoping I wouldn't notice. They're either incinerated or locked up so far underground that no one will ever see them ever again. No worries; I'm never going to forget that night as long as I live. ;)

Monday, June 13

Arguably the worst day ever. Angie woke up screaming because her back exploded overnight. I don't know what happened. We had to test the pressure response again to make sure the compression shirt would actually work. I don't want to write about this either quite frankly. The pressure response still works, the compression shirt works but if what I've heard from Lena is any indication, wearing a binder or compression shirt all day is not a good idea and you can't really sleep in them. Hopefully, Winston has an idea. I wonder if he realizes I butchered one of his barrels last night...Sorry, big guy!

I took a much-needed nap while Angie went and tried to fix everything by herself. We fought about it. It was...ugly...and I was right, as usual. She bought me Swagatam by way of apology but then ate most of it?? Nearly a 100 UD's of food and there are no leftovers???? And then she whined about dessert until we went down to the beach for ice cream. I swear I'm not making fun; I've honestly never seen her eat this much. She doesn't seem to notice or mind. I'm not going to mention it. I know she tries to stay tiny so the Valkyrie can lift her but maybe she's realizing that she needs to eat. I'm sure the suit can always be modified.

Tuesday, June 14

Angie's whimpering woke me up early this morning. I explained a million times why she can't sleep in the compression tank but guess who snuck out of bed at 3 am and tried to put it on

anyway? It's impossible to put a compression tank by yourself without scraping the exact bits that cause her so much pain. She had the turtle shell on when we went to bed but overnight, I guess the blotches spread more? But this time to the sides rather than vertically. I wanted to drag her to the hospital but we sat and did breathing exercises until the sun came up, trying to get her focus on anything but the twinges of pain. I really don't like the fact that they swelled overnight, but it looks like clear fluid, not pus, so infection is unlikely. So no hospital for now, only because the struggle it would take to drag her there would probably be more trouble than it's worth. Suddenly, Mom's sleep darts sound like a great idea. (I wouldn't, but still...)

After we got back to sleep, we slept in til noon and to our surprise, the skin of the blisters had thickened a bit like calluses. Not much of her back was spared, except for the very top of her shoulders and the line of her spine. Angie touched one and couldn't feel anything but once she pressed she started whimpering. I had to stop her after that; I don't see any point in testing the pain response when we don't need to know. Thankfully she listened and let me adjust the turtle shell's straps to fit. Then she stole another one of my sweaters to cover it up and locked herself in the lab all day.

Typical Angie.

After bringing her food all day, I arrived late last night to find her slumped over her desk. I had to get Athena to let me in so I could piggyback her to bed. She's the literal worst at taking care of herself. I don't even know how she made it through med school. Well, yes, I do. But the point is Angela's shit at self-care. I took the chance to wash, dry, and return the compression vest to Satya. One, I've already ordered one for Angela and it'll be here soon and two the turtle shell is doing a fine job right now and three if Angela tries to put on Satya's again, she'll burst a blister. I'd like to avoid that, for sure.

Wednesday, June 15

Sooooo...I sorta threw Angie in the bathtub this morning. It's not big enough for two of us and honestly, she complained about that fact more than being dragged to the bathroom before she could sneak out to her lab again. I sort of just poured the water down her back. It wasn't super-efficient but I wasn't gonna scrub at it. She suggested doing that herself and I might have lost it a little. Just a little. I still can't stop thinking of what would happen if one of them popped. I really wish I could.

The calluses? They're definitely not blisters or blotches anymore. They've darkened in color, becoming a color you'd expect on your palms. They haven't really grown anymore either, which is great, I suppose. They remind me of stress blisters I used to get when I was younger. Mom always told me to stop scratching and wrapped my palms up. But they have the same quality, painful and full of fluid, flattening into a callused patch of skin within a few days. Hopefully, Angie's better than I was about tearing them off, which is probably why I haven't mentioned the resemblance. There's no telling what's under an area that large. I hope she wouldn't do something like that, but she's pretty on edge.

Thursday, June 16

When I got up early for drills, Angie was already gone. I texted her a bit, telling her to eat, but she didn't answer very much and I was too busy catching up to get away. So we didn't see each other until dinner time where she attacked Jesse's taco bar like a starved hyena. Even though Jesse cooked for everyone, there was only enough for everyone to have a couple of soft tacos and salad. Angela was finished eating by the time I got through one taco so I gave her my other one but then Jack and Mei gave her one too. I'd be lying if I said I got the tofurizo for myself; I figured Angela would want more. I've been trying my darndest to pay attention to the sly and not point out her new eating habits but then Jack and Mei noticed and gave Angie some of theirs too. (Still not over

Jack “steaks are the one true sustenance” Morrison being a vegetarian now, but stranger things have happened.) Angie apologized and explained that she’d been stuck in the lab all day but that’s...for sure only part of it. She ate everything which was not as much as Swagatam, but still, it was a lot. Despite that, she still looked hungry though so I put a basket of fruit on her side of the bed before I went to sleep. She’s back in her lab now but I’m sure she’ll be hungry when she gets back. She’s kind of like a tooth fairy? Except I’ll get cuddles instead of money. I’m enjoying being the little spoon; it’s been a while.

Friday, June 17

Sure enough, the basket of fruit was empty when I woke up with Angie clinging to my back. When I stretched, Angie woke up with a moan, which was, not gonna lie, a welcome way to wake up at first. But to a fully awoken me, that was an alarm. She wasn’t crying when I turned over but she was definitely awake and breathing way too fast. It turned out that tiny shifts in position jostled her back and the calluses had started reacting in a... different way.

Part of it hurts...part of it doesn’t. I’m risking some redaction if I write too much and Angie gets her hands on this, but it wasn’t like the 1st day or the 2nd day; it was a muted mix of both. As Angie described it, pain flares up only to be swiftly replaced by a nice sensation, a constant cycle every time she flexed for bent or moved. She doesn’t seem to be in too much pain, so it took some convincing before she agreed to head down to the lab for her daily tests and immediately after, consult with Winston. Much to my surprise, she pulled me out of a drill with Jack and Lena to drag me to Winston’s lab with her.

Angela presented all of her data, scans, and theories to Winston with a grimace on her face, her blush betrayed what I knew was still bothering her underneath yet another one of my sweaters. I was so embarrassed for her at this point, but Winston approached it completely straight-faced; he got the gist of the weirdness that Angela didn’t quite explain. The data’s she collected is impressive at this point, especially for a few days’ work.

Winston suggested some sort of growth based reward system, that the endorphins-inducing responses increase blood flow and the adrenaline-inducing responses provide protection or a warning system??? I swear I’m not stupid but their whole conversation starting going over my head. While growth happens, the pain is intended to ensure the blisters are left alone and Winston thinks there’s something under there. I helped Winston do an ultrasound, keeping Angela calm while she was clearly in pain and overstimulated, then watched Athena take a dozen scans of Angela and the conclusion is that there is nothing but fluid under the calluses, certainly nothing that can create or require such a response. He suggested a fluid tap but Angie, worn out from the ultrasounds, balked at that and showed him the results of one she did yesterday instead. We’re all pretty confused; why the reward system if there’s nothing to come of it?

Before I could catch up to her, Angie locked herself in her room after that. I tried, still am as I’m writing this, to get her to come out and talk to me. She told me to go away in a text. I’m sleeping alone tonight it seems.

Saturday, June 18

I asked Athena where Angela is. She said she didn’t know and then reminded me that Angie can engage administrative protocols that allow her to move about Gibraltar untracked. In my downtime, I checked the med bay, her office, all the common areas and Winston’s lab, but no one’s seen her. So she’s not just avoiding me, but also Winston and everyone else. Great.

Sunday, June 19

Angela kept away all day again. I texted her some but still no response. She’s clearly waiting until

she's ready to come to me which is pretty irritating, not gonna lie. She's got her head in her ass if she thinks she's the only worried about this whole mess. Wish she'd wait more than a week before forgetting our last argument but nope, stubborn is as stubborn does.

Chapter End Notes

-I love!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Fareeha!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Amari!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH

_oh Angela you stubborn binch. :/

-UD-universal dollar (bc global economy why not, it's the future)

-Trying to nail down Fareeha's voice/tone is a challenge that I have accepted. Not sure if I fulfilled it yet.

-Fareeha's journal is cheetah print, she hides it behind books in her bookshelf.

-The stress blisters-? I'm projecting again, whoops. They are really the closest way I could rationally the physical appearance of the wings' precursor.

Monday, June 20th

Chapter Summary

Angela returns to Fareeha's room two days after disappearing.

Chapter Notes

I hope to have the next chapter out this Sunday(5/7)! This chapter wasn't in my original plans- it just happened! :) Sometimes, this fic has a life of its own!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's 3:34 am when Fareeha opens her eyes, squinting sleepily at the dim light coming through the crack in her open door. For a moment, Angela hesitates to enter the room and Fareeha peers over the covers at her silhouette. Still wearing a huge sweater but now with jeans and her hair is down, messier than a bird's nest. She watches the blonde stifle a yawn before creeping into the room and shutting the door behind her. When she then tiptoes over to the bed, Fareeha shuts her eyes and slows her breathing again.

She hears Angela sits down in front of her, feels her brush her fingers against her left hand which is hanging off the side of the bed, hears her hum and sigh several times before speaking.

"I shouldn't have left you alone." Angela heaves another great sigh before continuing. "I only...I'd hoped Winston would have a better answer but he didn't and I...I wish I knew how to stay put when everything goes wrong, but I'm so scared...what if I'm dying, 'Reeha? What if it's like hypothermia? What if it only feels good because it's the end? What if my nanobots did something that even I can't see with my electron microscope? Everything comes back negative, everything looks fine but it's not. I know it's not but I don't know what's wrong. I hate not knowing." She stops her quiet babbling and takes another deep breath. "I just want this to be over so we can go back to normal and I can stop showcasing literally every shred of paranoia in my brain."

Fareeha flexes the fingers of her hand and clasps their fingers together.

"Why is it only easy for you to talk when you think I'm not listening?" she whispers, keeping her eyes closed. Angela barely hesitates before answering, even though her voice drops

"I can pretend you didn't hear anything. I can pretend there's still no one who's ever heard my thoughts. It's safer." She flinches at Fareeha's answering sigh. This is not the first time they've been over this.

"I'm not going to leave you."

"You don't *really* know that-"

"I'm not going to abandon you or betray you. What if I write that on your mirror? I can write it on your desk and paint it on the ceiling in your office, everywhere you can see it. I'm not going anywhere no matter what. Even if you act like you want me to sometimes."

“You can’t say that. Everyone leaves; it’s just-”

“Well, I’ve been your exception this long,” Fareeha blurts, trying to keep her voice from breaking. “I’m your mystery case, Angie. If you never figure out why, that’s fine. But I’m gonna keep being that exception, whether you believe me now or later or never.”

Angela breathes, shudders, and begins to cry. “Fuck, I’m so sorry, ‘Reeha.” She tries to stifle her hiccups with the back of her free hand. “I’ve been stuck in my own head about this for *days*. ”

“I’ve noticed.” says the Egyptian wryly, opening her eyes and squeezing her lover’s hand gently. “I didn’t take it personally.”

“I’ll make it up to you soon-”

“Stop talking and get in bed, Angie.” She pulls on her hand to steady Angela as she gets to her feet, swaying with exhaustion. As she climbs over Fareeha’s prone figure, she adds, “Just imagine: if you’d waited for two seconds after we met with Winston, I was gonna spoil you for actually keeping your promise.”

Angela groans. “I hate everything. Why do I always run?”

“Because you’re you,” Fareeha says cheerfully as her girlfriend burrows under the covers. Before she gets too comfortable, she rolls over to face the sniffling woman and taps her gently on the nose. Angela wrinkles her nose briefly, then sighs.

“Thank you for putting up with me.”

Fareeha just kisses her forehead in response and scoots closer, tangling their limbs together. They listen to each other breathe for several long moments. In fact, the soldier’s nearly asleep when her girlfriend pipes up again.

“I swear, most of the time I know you won’t leave me, but when I run, it goes out the window because I’m alone, you know? You’re not there to remind me when I’m hiding.”

Later Fareeha wants to strangle her past herself, but as romantic gestures go, she supposes it could have been worse. Without hesitating, Fareeha quips with the bravado that only comes with being half-conscious: “I guess I better put a ring on your finger so you won’t forget about me so easily.”

They both stop breathing. Both of them are fully awake now; Angela stares wide-eyed and open-mouthed at Fareeha in the pre-dawn dimness but the Egyptian has her eyes screwed shut and her jaw clenched. It’s a long moment before Fareeha speaks again.

“You are more than welcome to pretend that didn’t just happen.”

“I...I’d rather not. Besides, that might actually work.” Angela reaches out and brushes her fingertips against her girlfriend’s cheek until her eyes open, her face relaxing into a nervous smile.

“Uh, I don’t actually have a ring yet-” Fareeha happily stops talking, melting into the kiss that Angela presses to her lips.

“Maybe we can discuss this a bit more when we’re both actually awake and not emotionally compromised?”

“There’s the rational scientist I’ve been missing. Hullo Dr. Ziegler, fancy sticking around to keep Angela from making bad decisions?”

“Oh hush,” says Angela, pressing another kiss to her lover’s lips and snuggling in closer. They sleep easily after that but not for very long.

Three hours later, it is not the morning light that wakes them both, but the blaring klaxon sirens of the Watchpoint calling them for active duty. Fareeha rolls right out of bed, landing on her feet and shouting over the alarm to Athena that she’ll be ready in twenty. Angela, on account of her condition, sits up slower and reports to Athena that she too will be ready by then. The sounds stop, much to their relief, leaving only the ominous flashing red lights and overcast Gibraltar sun to light their way.

Angela scoots off the bed, cursing quietly as she works over logistics. “Okay, I can’t do this by myself.”

By the closet, Fareeha pauses, eyebrow raised, from where she’s wriggling out of her pajamas and shoving one leg into her flight undersuit.

“I can’t get into my bodysuit like this. I need your help or it’ll take forever. I’ve modified to fit my recent scans; figured this would happen. But it still will...slide. Can we go to my office?”

Thinking quickly, the Raptora pilot slips her dark blue suit past her waist and starts wiggling her arms into it before shrugging it over her shoulders. Without prompting, Angela zips up the back. They’ve done this enough times before, but Angela usually leaves right about now. Fareeha looks over her shoulder as if to check that Angela has not done her usual disappearing act

“Okay, let’s go to your office then. I can suit up in the armory much quicker than you can get back and forth anyway. Piggyback?”

As they leave her room in a hurry, Angela clinging on for dear life, Fareeha can’t help but notice the difference in situations. Now it’s morning, rather than night. They have a different goal, but the urgency is the same. Rather than the dim, deserted halls, the flurry of an emergency mission grips the base. Lucio, Lena, and Genji sprint down the hall, heading toward the launch bay. She hears Reinhardt’s booming laughter echoing down the hall. Pausing their conversation, Ana and Jesse raise an eyebrow at the pair of them as Fareeha jogs past.

“Fareeha? Angela? Where-”

“We’ll be there in 10 minutes!” she shouts, taking a turn toward the med bay. Angela groans into her hair; she feels this more than she hears it, a humming vibration in her scalp, a puff of air.

“Why is your mother always around to see me do something embarrassing?”

“There’s worse ways she could catch you riding me.” Angela covers her girlfriend’s mouth with both hands as she realizes what’s Fareeha’s implying, but she doesn’t quite manage to stifle the laughter that echoes in the deserted med wing.

“I hate you.” The doctor grouches as she slides down and opens the med bay door. The clock says they have eight minutes so she wastes no time in opening the door to her office and activating the suit bay. Angela grabs her bodysuit, already shimmying out of her jeans and socks. Fareeha helps her out of her sweater and undoes the straps of the turtle shell while Angela unzips the front. She shimmies out of it, letting her girlfriend drape it over one of the consulting chairs. When the soldier turns around again, she does not like the look of her back. Angela notices her stricken expression.

“All the lymph’s been reabsorbed. They won’t pop, I promise.”

Fareeha crosses the room to her, suppressing a shudder. In her mind’s eye, she sees fever blisters on her own adolescent palms, the craters they leave when she’d gnawed at them until they burst,

the multitude of tiny holes where blood wells up mixing with clear lymph, flooding the tip of her tongue with copper. She shakes her head to clear the images and pulls Angela's suit up over her bare shoulders.

As Fareeha pulls the suit snugly over her back and zips her up, Angela's knees buckle. She breathes in sharply as the pain radiates up and down her back before smoothing out into a pleasant buzz of warmth and subsiding completely. Fareeha presses a kiss onto her hair.

"You okay?"

"Yes, of course," says Angela turning around to look up at Fareeha, who gives her a crooked smile. "I suppose the blush gives that away. Shoo, silly. You should go..."

"You don't need help with the rest of the suit?" Fareeha asks but she's already glancing nervously at the clock. Angela flaps a hand at the suit bay.

"It's anti-grav! And automated! Go, I'll meet you in the loading dock!" She stretches up for kiss and the taller woman meets her halfway. They squeeze hands once more before Fareeha breaks away. Angela can't even watch her go because the clock is ticking and the lights are still flashing. She has to get ready.

In the anti-grav field, the Valkyrie awaits her and she steps in, used to the sudden floating sensation as the field envelopes her. A quick touch of the keypad activates the suit behind her and the suit bay whirs around her, snugly fitting the armor on her figure. The halo-shaped neural interface beeps as it pairs with the small chip in her brain. When the rest of the armor has been attached, the antigrav gradually powers down and set her on the floor. The Caduceus staff and her little pistol dispense from the wall as she exits. Angela shoves the pistol in her holster and hopes, as usual, that she will not have to use it. Her grip on the Caduceus activates her self-healing port for a brief moment, as the staff checks on its user. She finds it curious that, even with all that has happened, the caduceus does not consider her to be injured.

While she keys the sequences to disguise the suit bay once more, she does a quick check of the neural link. Her wings flare, fold, spread, and lift her a short ways off the ground all with a series of thoughts. She prefers to control the wings through the neural link but Angela tests her back-up anyways- flexing her back activates the flight matrix, slowing any descent in the heat of battle. Right now, it results in an uncomfortable twinge, but not dizzying enough to be a liability. Angela takes deep breath and steadies herself.

After taking two brief moments to secure her office and the medbay, Mercy takes off toward the loading dock at a dead sprint.

Chapter End Notes

-Angie's a runner. :'(

-most of the time, Fareeha is awake when Angela starts on her midnight+ confessions. It's not the possibility that Fareeha might hear her, it's the idea that it's dark and she doesn't have to worry about her facial expressions in addition to finding the right words.

-Fareeha, on the other hand, prefers to watch facial expressions and try to gauge people's reactions to her words, so the dark is not the ideal. For example, if she could have seen Angie's reaction to her impromptu proposal, she wouldn't have tried to take it back.

-actual transcript of my thoughts, writing in a bliss before realizing Fareeha was about to propose: god i love these lovey dovey feels scenes, they really make up for all the pain that's gonna follow. Of course angela wouldn't go straight to sleep she's thinking about too much she's not gonna shut up until she lets it all out oh my god fareeha what do you even say to tha- oh my god. Oh mY GOD
SAHDJKSADNSDSDNSDKSLSKFD

Clear Skies

Chapter Summary

Pharah, Mercy, and the rest of a Strike Team engage Talon a castle in the Swiss Alps.

Chapter Notes

Mission chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Pharah watches Mercy pace the length of the VTOL aircraft twice, take off her halo at least three times and redo her ponytail, chatter nervously with Zenyatta four separate times for a grand total of twenty minutes, avoid Winston like the plague, and sit in the co-pilot chair for a very jittery five minutes. Even Tracer, however high-strung and energetic the Brit usually was, seems unsettled by Mercy's inability to relax.

They're going to Switzerland. High in the Alps, Winston had received reports of Talon regrouping and an unusual frequency of bizarre deaths after dark in the neighboring town over the past few days. The team needs to evacuate the civilians and shut down Talon before they can do any more damage. Reaper's likely to be there, even if Winston hadn't mentioned the wraith in his brief address during take off, but during the briefing, Shrike and Soldier had shared a look that, even with one eye between them, Pharah did not miss.

Nearly everyone else on the ship is lounging about in various states of pre-battle activity. Torbjorn's watching D.Va play video games, fondly criticizing her play style. Genji sits on one side of Symmetra; Pharah sits between her and Shrike, with Soldier 76 next to his old friend, and Winston, who discusses something with him on a tablet. In the cockpit, Tracer's chatting with Zenyatta, who has now taken a seat in the co-pilot chair. Just behind them stands Mercy, posture tight, staring out of the windshield at the terrain unfolding ahead of them. At her request, one of Zenyatta's orbs hovers around her head emitting a soft golden light but Mercy's still posture doesn't mean it's working. Even though the suit's wings are folded into a resting position, the orange hard light "hover feathers" of the Valkyrie flicker into existence sporadically, almost as if the young field medic's flicking a switch absently- on, off, on, off, on, off, on, off.

Shrike and Pharah both look up when Mercy pushes off the wall of the cockpit vestibule and begins her third pace of the aircraft.

"Mercy," Shrike calls out, startling the anxious Swiss out of her measured steps. She eases closer, painfully aware of the eyes of the Amaris' on her.

"Ah, yes?" Her accent is much more pronounced, a noticeable byproduct of nerves. Pharah reaches out to grab her hand and Mercy takes it, squeezing gratefully.

"I was making tea before we were called to action. It's lavender." The older woman retrieves a thermos from between her and Soldier 76. "Have some; it'll soothe your nerves."

“I’m not nervous!” Mercy squeaks, as the orb around her glows brighter. Shrike just laughs and hands her the mug-top of the thermos. The medic relaxes the tiniest bit as the sniper fills it to the brim and fragrance reaches her nose.

“It’s not easy to return to one’s home, especially under these circumstances,” Shrike says after the younger healer takes a sip.

“This is the first time I’ve ever...I cannot...” Mercy trails off, transitioning to fretful German. At this point, just about everyone on the bench looks up at her. Blushing, she ducks her head and gulps down more tea.

“Believe me, I understand. It’ll be alright, *habibti*. No harm will come to you here.” She takes the mug back and replaces it on the thermos. Mercy thanks her softly and Shrike smiles her eye crinkling.

“Tracer would like me to tell you there are ten minutes until we touchdown. Please be prepared.” Zenyatta’s sudden announcement and presence make very little sense, in light of the intercom system and their personal comms, until the omnic places another orb in Mercy’s orbit. He floats back the way he came.

Pharah slides off the bench to kneel on the floor of the aircraft, carefully, as Mercy sinks slowly into a sitting position.

“I will be fine once we are on the ground.” She whispers. “I don’t know why I’m so jittery. There is no one here for me. Switzerland is not different from any other country.”

“It’s better to freak out now.” Pharah pauses as the plane rocks a bit-turbulence, perhaps?- before continuing. “We’ll get this over with and talk later, okay?”

Before Mercy can muster a response, the plane rocks something fierce. The team scrambles to stay steady-D.Va and Torbjorn jump to their feet, ready to fight. Neither Symmetra or Genji respond to the disturbance since they both trade heavily in keeping their balance. Soldier gets thrown off the edge of bench into Winston’s lap. Shrike very narrowly avoids the sharp edges of the Raptora suit by clinging to the handrail behind her. Over the comms Tracer frantically apologizes while Soldier 76 barks out orders: he, Mercy, Pharah, Ana, Winston, and Genji will head to the Talon defended fortress while the rest of the team evacuates the town’s citizens. After the worst of it is over, Pharah and Mercy get to their feet Mercy returns the two orbs back to Zenyatta’s orbit. Pharah puts on her helmet and looks to Shrike, who’s still gripping the handrail while she one-handedly slips her rifle over her shoulder.

“I’m gonna drop you lot outside the fortress really quickly! In a minute! Quite literally a minute! Winston, these anti-aircraft guns were *not* on your intel!” Her comm-lecture trails off into curses as the jet dips and swerves.

“Sorry about that. We’ll take them down, Tracer! Just drop us as close as you can; we’ll handle the rest.”

The strike team hustles to the bay door. Soldier 76 prefers a parachute but Shrike allows herself to be picked up by Pharah in a bridal carry, safely shielded from the imminent heat of the Raptora’s blaster. She reaches up to retrace the tattooed udjat and Pharah huffs.

“I can’t do that. My hands are full.”

“After we’re back on the ship then.” Behind them, Mercy smiles. They always do this- giving each other a reason to fight, to come back via the simple gesture. They all have their rituals.

“Keep the skies clear for me?” She asks Pharah as Tracer begins to lower the door. The sounds of guns and engines roar drown out Pharah’s response so she sticks her tongue out at the medic over her shoulder as well. Winston jumps out the door as soon as it’s open enough; Genji’s clinging to his back. Mercy waits for Pharah to take off before activating her teammate tracking and flying after her. Somewhere behind them, Soldier drops out and Tracer flies off to distract the aircraft gun until they reach the ground. She hovers as Pharah drops Shrike off. She wants desperately to join Pharah in the air, can’t help shake the feeling that it’s safer for some reason. Usually, Mercy limits her airtime because it makes her an easy target, but there’s no place she wants to be more right now.

She shakes the thought as Soldier lands in a courtyard below them where Winston is waiting. Shrike runs above to find a good perch and Genji has already run ahead, as usual. With one last look at Pharah’s ascending silhouette, Mercy touches down and resigns herself to damage boosting Winston and Soldier as they plow through the base.

The mission goes pleasantly well. Soldier and Shrike help keep Genji out of trouble; he even circles back to flank their backside instead of staying in the rafters and trying to pick off Talon goons. Shrike, Soldier, and Winston thin the crowd so efficiently that Mercy begins to feel less protected and more useless. It’s not until they get to the inner courtyard where Talon is protecting something they’ve stored in an underground cistern, that it really goes to shit.

Shrike spots Talon’s famous Widowmaker and requests Genji’s help in incapacitating her while Winston and Soldier 76 charge the crowd. Pharah arrives with a timely prepared rocket barrage and Mercy can’t explain how relieved she is to fly to her with her damage stream engaged, even if she’s not terribly happy with the carnage that results below. She switched to healing as some stragglers try to return fire; Pharah responds with her usual gun as Mercy calmly hovers behind her. The Raptora suit beeps, spent on its fuel for now and Pharah quickly lands on a parapet nearby. Disappointed their aerial dance is over, Mercy dutifully floats downward until she lands among Winston, Soldier and Genji. Shrike’s absence is not unusual; the fact that Genji’s back means they probably succeeded in incapacitating the rival sniper.

They’re gearing up to head down into the cistern when Pharah cries out, not over the comms, but from the parapet.

“Ana,” growls an unfamiliar voice over the comm link. “I suppose you always did make the best dinners. I’ll be sure to let you know how this one is.”

Mercy is already dashing to the stairs that lead from the courtyard at the sound of Reaper’s voice. She knows, in her heart, that Genji climbing up a wall, Winston using his boosters, or Shrike through sheer force of motherly anger will get there before she does. She doesn’t even consider that it might be a trap until it’s too late. She already has her pistol out when Reaper mists out of the darkened stairwell and shoots him twice in the head but he only laughs and floats away.

Frightened both of Reaper and her poor decision making, she sprints up the remaining stairs. Pharah is still at the top of the parapet when she reaches it, sitting up. Genji is holding her helmet in her hands while she wipes from blood off a cut from her eye. The medic rushes to her side, holstering her pistol and retrieving her staff from its place on her back. The Egyptian’s smile is short-lived; her eyes widen as Reaper begins to materialize behind Mercy. Genji passes her helmet back and draws his sword.

Pharah and Mercy scramble to their feet but Mercy doesn’t draw her pistol again. She’s safely behind Pharah and her gun. Even with Mercy alternatively boosting Genji and Pharah, Reaper still parries both of their attacks easily. Soldier emerges from the stairwell already firing rounds at the wraith. Reaper cackles, delighted by the presence of his best enemy, blocking Soldier’s bullets with one shot gun and slapping Genji out of the way with the other. Irritated with the extended

melee, Mercy heals her allies, grabs her pistol from her holster and straps the Caduceus to her back once more.

Unfortunately, this is what Reaper has been waiting for. She sees it, always does, in his posture when he prepares to perform his lethal death dance. Before he can utter the first “die”, Mercy flings herself off the parapet. It will not be the first mission she’s had to resurrect the team after Reaper does this, not even the second. However, it is the first time in a long time that tears spring to her eyes as she essentially abandons the team, even knowing she can’t do any good if she’s up there with them. She’s only been falling for half a second when she hears:

“Die-”

“No one’s dying today, Gabriel.” Shrike’s voice rings out over the comms and Mercy sighs in relief. She engages the hover and rolls over in mid air, preparing to land four stories below. She doesn’t see the remaining Talon goon aiming up. A shot rings out. The medic jerks back instinctively, her wings flaring out as she flexes her back, but her back explodes into pain.

Fall faster, she thinks frantically, trying to get off the way. She’s dizzied by the pain but the Valkyrie does respond by killing the hover and letting her fall. Just before she reaches a safe point to re-engage the hover, a jutting gargoyle from a passing balcony catches on her suit, shredding the Valkyrie's wings as she falls, cutting deep into her armor and sending her back into an agonizing spasm of pain.

Vaguely aware that she’s screaming, Mercy blacks out.

Chapter End Notes

There will be another chapter this weekend, don't worry! I'm not that cruel. I promised y'all'd see wings this weekend and I'll be damned if I break that promise!

For Ref:

-who’s on base? Mei, McCree, Hanzo, Zarya, Rein, Lucio, Bastion, Roadhog, Junkrat

-who’s on this mission? Civie Duty: Symmetra, Tracer, D.Va, Torbjorn, Zenyatta, Talon Duty: Ana, Mercy, Genji, Soldier, Pharah, Winston

-who’s not in OW? Reaper, Widow, Sombra, Orisa

-we’re on a mission, it's all code names all the time. Speaking of which, (this is not series-canon but) i just thought about the P&R joke:

Pharah: From now on, we will be using code names. You can address me as Eagle One. Satya, code name -- Been There, Done That. Angela is --Currently Doing That. Lena is -- It Happened Once in a Dream; McCree code name -- If I Had To Pick a Dude. Zarya is -- Eagle Two.

Zarya: Oh thank God.

-please say “anxious swiss” ten times fast

-also, i'm sorry.

Emergence

Chapter Summary

The team scrambles to get Angela back to the Watchpoint and treat her.

Chapter Notes

Last chapter for the weekend! 4 in one weekend! Woohoo!!!!
Also happy one month anniversary to this fic!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Pharah winces when she sees Mercy tumble off the parapet in a panic. There's only one reason she ever checks out like that and it's not pleasant for anyone involved except for perhaps Reaper. With a resigned sigh, she grits her teeth continues to fire on the wraith.

Thankfully, Shrike is there to sleep-dart Reaper before he starts his rampage. Soldier 76 plucks Pharah's stolen comm unit out of his ear, then picks him up and dumps him over the outside wall of the parapet down into the evergreen forest far below. He'll wake none worse for the wear, of course, but it will keep him well out of the way until they leave.

As she's putting the comm unit back in her ear, she hears a heart-rending scream of agony, so loud that it takes everything not to take it out and instead hop over the parapet and look for Mercy. Her suit's interface tracks Mercy to where she is falling limply into the courtyard, but even as she jets toward her, she realizes she cannot get there fast enough.

"Winston! Get Mercy!" Pharah screams into the comms as she sees the gorilla lumbering out of the cistern entrance. He jumps toward the falling medic and catches her in one arm, clinging to a courtyard balcony with the other. Pharah flies toward and takes Mercy in her arms, jetting back down to the courtyard. Winston lands beside her as she kneels on the concrete, trying not to jostle her passenger.

"Winston to Tracer, we need evac. Mercy is injured badly!"

"She's what?" Tracer can't believe her ears. "Don't yank my chain, Winston! We're still working!"

"I don't know what happened, but we need evac, Tracer." Pharah chokes out as she kneels, taking one hand from under Mercy to see her blood slick on the blue metal of her suit. She looks back at the wall where Mercy was falling and see blood on the gargoyle, on the wall below. She doesn't want to look at the medic's back, but she forces herself to lean her unconscious form forward.

"Shrike to Tracer, we can finish our objective by the time you get here. Just get here!" She and Soldier arrive in the courtyard. Soldier, Winston, and Genji immediately head down into the cistern. Tracer apologizes and announces she'll be there in 10 minutes, maybe less since they'd taken out the people operating the anti-aircraft gun.

Pharah stops listening and looks down at her girlfriend. One of the Valkyrie's wings is missing but that doesn't worry her. Mercy likely has spare parts and even spare suits. There's no need to search the castle rubble for that. Her black body suit is torn where the gargoyles horns and snout scraped away the armor. And beneath that, her skin has burst.

Pharah's vision swims. She doesn't really hear Shrike asking questions as she pulls Mercy to her. She curses, finding the busted port on Mercy's back. The medic groans, delirious and cries out when Shrike jabs a biotic needle into her jugular.

"Pharah!" Shrike snaps, breaking her out of the brain fog that threatened to swallow her. "I'm wrapping Mercy in my coat; I need you to carry her back to the ship. Can you handle that?"

Pharah nods. That she can handle right now, but not much else. Mercy's out of commission and Tracer's on her way. Hold Mercy until Tracer gets here. Fly her way to the ship if need be.

Shrike stands alert, watching for any more stragglers. They are vulnerable, terribly so, in this courtyard. Mercy stirs, babbling in German. She opens her eyes a couple of times. She doesn't move much, which Pharah appreciates up until the moment she realizes that maybe she can't?

"Mom?" Pharah whispers, not caring who hears over the comm. She's had enough of call signs for one day. Shrike tilts her head to show she's heard. "Do you think it hit her spinal cord?"

Pharah knows her mother well enough to read the drop in her shoulders as a tired sigh. Their masks have never been a problem between them.

"I will do everything I can, Pharah." She pauses. "She's in a lot of pain. That's why she's unconscious."

The next eight minutes pass slowly, marked only by the single shot that Shrike fires off, killing the Talon goon that fired at Mercy. Pharah, unaware of the goon's transgression, only feels irritation that the rifle report woke Mercy long enough to reach toward the Raptora's helmet before her movement jostled her back. As she lets her arm fall back with a cry, Pharah's once again reminded that at least one of the blisters has burst. So much for out of sight out of mind.

She doesn't come out of her thoughts until the VTOL is hovering overhead and Winston and the others are emerging from the cistern, carrying several external hard drives. While Shrike steadies her, Pharah gets to her feet, trying not to jostle Mercy. They climb into the jet and Tracer takes off, easing the jet out of the courtyard as the bay door closes behind the strike team.

"She's not going into shock, Fareeha. That's encouraging." Ana says to her daughter as she lay Angela on the tiny bed of the jet's med bay. She snorts bitterly but otherwise, doesn't respond.

She pulls her helmet off and sets it on a nearby bench, then sits next to it. Ana tosses her her jacket and looks pointedly at her bloodied armor and she concedes the point. When she's finished cleaning, she realizes that if Ana's jacket is in her hands, then Angela's back is uncovered and the blisters are still very much popped.

The soldier can feel the saliva pooling in her mouth as she shoots to her feet and runs into the jet's bathroom. There's nothing but bile in her stomach but it comes up anyway.

"I'm going as fast as I can back to the Watchpoint! Strap in! We'll be there in 45!" Hearing Tracer on the intercom, Pharah wipes her mouth with the back of her hand and heads back to her bench, strapping herself in next to Angela's bed. Ana's strapped her down, avoiding her back and the arm closest to her. Grateful for this, Fareeha takes her gauntlet off and grasps Angela's hand from where it dangles. She ignores the limpness of the hand.

Ana sits down next to her and begins to strap herself in. "I've sedated her, given her some pain meds. 'Reeha, she'll be okay. We have the same tech; her delivery system got damaged in the fall, that's all. That's the only reason there was any blood."

Fareeha tears her eyes away from the back of Angela's head and the measured breaths that raise and lower her torso. Her mother has her mask off finally; automatically, she reaches up to trace the eye of Horus under her good eye.

"Thank you, Mom."

Ana snorts. "Of course. If I lost one daughter, I'd lose the other. Can't have that."

Fareeha smiles and leans on her mother's soldier, trying to keep the suit from jabbing hers. She keeps her eyes open as long as she can, but while they're over France, she falls asleep. She doesn't dream.

When she wakes up, Angela and Ana are gone. In fact, the VTOL is completely empty. The Raptora pilot struggles against the seat belts for a minute before she remembers to unbuckle them.

"Peace, Fareeha. We returned to the Watchpoint eight minutes ago." Zenyatta's voice floats into the open loading dock, followed by a gently glowing orb that circles her head and the omnic himself. Fareeha sighs, no stranger to Zenyatta's special brand of magic. He waits until she's gotten to her feet before he takes the orb back with an apologetic tilt of his head.

"Angela has been taken to the med bay, but she is in stable condition. Your mother is taking excellent care of her." says the omnic as she follows him into the hangar. They stop by the armory so Fareeha can get out of the Raptora. Once the suit hanging in its usual spot and doing repairs, she turns back to Zenyatta. She frowns and crosses her arms.

"Zen, what aren't you telling me?"

"Your mother wants you to freshen up before you arrive at the med bay. She suspects you will refuse to leave once you arrive." Zenyatta floats the door, humming thoughtfully. "I agreed since your flight suit is not made for comfort."

She can't argue with that, not really. There's something off about the scenario but she doesn't question it further. A few minutes later and they are in standing in front of Fareeha's door.

"Zen," says the soldier, drawing up to her full height. "If I wanted to go see Angela right now, what would you do?"

"I confess I would let you go; I do not wish to fight you." Fareeha grins and takes a step in the direction of the med bay.

"But," the monk continues serenely, "Ana has promised to sleep-dart you should you step into the med bay without complying with her wishes. That would in turn waste more time."

Grumbling, Fareeha stops walking and returns to her door, jamming her thumb against the access pad until Athena opens the door. Zenyatta remains outside, humming in amusement. As soon as the door closes, she strips out of her flight suit and throws it in the hamper she has just for them. It does no good to put them with her other clothing since the flight suit always smells of smoke, gasoline, and grease. Nope, the flight suits go into a thick zippered bag until she washes them.

As she scrubs her hair and body in the shower, she's fondly irritated that her mother requires this. Then she thinks of Angela waking up to her girlfriend-fiancee?!- covered in dirt and sweat and gasoline. Perhaps not the greatest idea. Mother knows best indeed.

Once she's convinced she smells acceptable, the Egyptian woman dresses in sweatpants and a tank, then throws on a long-sleeved thermal. She grabs a blanket, a novel, and a neck pillow. The more she thinks about it, the less she feels she'll be able to sleep in her own room if Angela gets confined to the med bay.

When she emerges once more, Zenyatta is still waiting. "Better?"

She nods and they head to the med bay. When they arrive, the first thing she notices is that the door is locked. The second thing she notices, once Ana has Athena let them in, is the mask around her mother's face. She's wearing surgical gloves and her outfit's stripped of the armor, leaving her light under armor on. There's blood on her blue gloves. Thirdly, there is a curtain around the hospital bed at the far end of the med bay. Fareeha breathes in sharply, about to start yelling at her mother for making her wait and deception, but Ana strips her glove off and has her sleep pistol pointed at Fareeha in one quick fluid motion.

"Fareeha, you are not here to distract me. If you cannot stay calm then you will *leave*. Angela is fine, no matter what conclusions you've jumped to—"

"Why the curtain?" she grits out, wrinkling her nose at the pistol in her face. Ana's expression softens and she reholsters it, stripping her other glove and tossing them both into the waste bin.

"For privacy. You will see why soon enough. I know she is your love, but I need you to stay calm. Panic helps no one." Ana pulls her daughter in for a hug which Fareeha returns, but she can't tear her eyes away from the white curtain.

"How bad is it?"

"Not actually bad at all, *habibti*. Just a bit unusual. And I'm still working, of course."

Fareeha closes her eyes for a brief second, trying to steady herself. "Zen, can I get a—"

The orb is relaxing her before she can finish the sentence; she sighs as the calmness floods her muscles. Her mother releases her and beckons them both toward the curtain. Fareeha follows in a slight daze. When she rounds the edge of the curtain, she sees Satya first, perched primly on a seat of her own design. She's still dressed in her mission outfit, save for her visor. A quick look behind her finds the piece of equipment discarded haphazardly on a countertop. While she's wondering why Satya would do something like to her equipment, she realizes she's avoiding the person she really wants to look at— Angela.

The medic's laying on her stomach, still unconscious. There are a couple of drip bags ending in an IV in her arm and monitor calmly registering her heart beat. A blood pressure cuff inflates quietly on her upper arm. Her Valkyrie and body suit have been removed completely, leaving her exposed skin out in the open. Eyes roving, she finds the crumpled equipment under the hospital bed. There's a sheet covering her from the waist down at least.

Again Fareeha realizes she's still avoiding the issue she doesn't want to face. She makes herself look at Angela's left blister, the one that burst, bled, and took Mercy out of the sky.

But there is no blister.

Outstretched from Angela's shoulder blade to Satya's palm is a bird wing, barely long enough to pass Angela's fingertips had her arm been stretched out. The Indian woman passes a soft cloth over the flight feathers, cleaning the blood off with peroxide. Fareeha watches transfixed as the rusty feathers become a silvery blonde, not unlike Angela's hair.

“They suit her, don’t they?” Satya asks softly. It’s the only indication that she’s aware of their presence. With a chuckle, Ana reaches out and pushes her daughter’s jaw closed.

“I told you she was fine, ‘Reeha.” Ana scolds gently, heading over to a box of medium gloves and donning a pair. “Satya, would you make a seat for her?”

When she’s had a seat, Ana goes to her own seat on the other side of the bed, rolling a surgical tray with her. The hospital bed is much lower than usual, allowing Ana to comfortably lean over the bed and palpate the right blister’s callused skin. Fareeha winces, so used to that causing pain, but Angela’s out cold. Her mother hums in satisfaction.

“Well, there’s the other one! Tell me Fareeha, how on Earth did you both miss this?”

“They don’t show up on scans or ultrasounds. And they...hurt her.” She whispers, wondering that herself. “There’s no way we could have touched them long enough to feel them. Why are you so calm about this?”

Ana raises an eyebrow at her, then begins to disinfect the surface of the blister. “I don’t know if you’ve looked at our lives lately, Fareeha, but Genji and Hanzo summon magic dragons through their tattoos. My rival is a woman whose skin is blue, almost purple. Gabriel is a cloud of seething rage and hatred. You’re sitting on solidified photons. Your girlfriend can raise the dead under the right circumstances but you’re wondering why she has wings?”

Fareeha shakes her head, still bemused. Ana prepares to make a cut down the midline of the blister and she shudders, looking away. While she watches Satya clean the left wing, her mother makes a cut from top to bottom and passes over it several times, using a fresh towel to keep the leaking fluid from staining the sheets as it rolls over the calluses. In the same manner, she makes two perpendicular cuts an inch or so from the end of the original incision. She probes inside of the cavity and gently unfolding the wing inside. When she’s satisfied with its form, she replaces it and begins to cut away the hardened skin. Zenyatta dons his own pair of gloves and helps her by replacing scalpel blades, towels and continuing to disinfect the area as needed. Ana keeps a centimeter or so of the edge where Angela’s healthy skin is. She risks a scar if she nicks the living skin; it will fall off eventually.

While Ana and Zenyatta do this, Satya continues to clean the other wing. For a half hour, Fareeha toys with the idea of reaching out to help once or twice but the thought nauseates her every time. It takes two or three minutes for Satya to clean each long feather with the soft cloth and the fizzing peroxide. She’s almost made it to the first joint of the wing’s bone. Silver blends into russet at that point, sharply contrasting each other. Satya gets up to wash the cloth for a third time, letting Angela’s wing droop limply off the side of the bed.

“Can I have a cloth too?”

Ana and Zen look up from their work, curious. Even Fareeha’s surprised at herself.

“Fuck, Zen take this back, I can’t think straight.” Zenyatta raises a hand, bringing the orb back to his own orbit. The younger Amari takes several deep breaths, listens to the beeping machine and hones in on Angela’s own deep breaths. She scoots her chair closer and accepts the cloth and a pair of gloves from Satya who also rolls another surgical table between their chairs. She pours the bottle of peroxide into a shallow bowl

“You can start on her skin. I imagine it will not be comfortable if dries.” Satya points to the base of the demolished blister where blood has begun to dry under the edges of the edges of callused skin’s remains. “The nanobots have done their work. She’s no longer bleeding.”

“Right, of course.” Fareeha scoots closer, ignoring her mother’s concerned gaze. She has to do something or sitting here will drive her mad, but she’s spent enough time in this bizarre situation that she doesn’t need the orb to keep reasonably calm, right? Dipping the cloth in the bowl, she wrings it out briefly before beginning to wipe down the newly revealed skin. “I’m not going to panic, you know. I get it. She’s fine. She’s just got wings and they’re pretty tiny and silver but it’s nothing terrible.” She giggles, slightly hysterical, then stops.

“Oh no, angel jokes won’t be funny anymore.”

“Why is that?” Satya asks, taking Fareeha’s off-kilter response in stride while the other two glance at each other in concern. “They seem like they’d be the most appropriate, all things considered.”

“Her name’s Angela. She saves people. Now she’s got wings? It’s just not funny the third time around.” As she wipes down Angela’s skin, she’s pleased to see it’s the usual milky tone and not reddened or callused. Wings aside, Angela seems healthy enough.

Well,” Zenyatta starts, pausing from where he’s adjusting a towel. “Good things come in threes, do they not? Angela’s certainly good.”

“No, she’s the best, And there’s only one of her.” Ana chuckles at her daughter’s petulant grumbling until she blushes.

“You sound like you need a nap, ‘Reeha.”

Fareeha considers that for a second longer than she should have. Between watching her girlfriend fall from the sky, holding her battered and bleeding body, seeing the popped blister, taking a warm shower, and thinking -even for a split second- that she’d lost the love of her life, Fareeha feels the exhaustion in her bones. Her brain fills with cotton as she reflects on everything that has happened in the past 24 hours, the past 3 days, the past week.

“Angela will be here when you wake up. We can roll your bed next to hers when we’re done here.” Zenyatta’s calm voice brings her to the surface of her thoughts, brings her gaze from where she’d been staring in wonder at all the blood on Angela’s skin. She looks from the omnic to her mother.

“*I can’t sleep after today.*” The Arabic spills from her lips before she’s fully aware of her own thoughts.

“*Zenyatta can keep the nightmares away, my love. I will not leave your side. Put the cloth down.*” At her mother’s gentle command, Fareeha puts the cloth on the surgical tray and gets to her feet. Zenyatta hands her an orb and Ana follows her around the curtain to the other bed, where Fareeha has her blanket and pillow. Her mother holds her hand while she climbs into the bed, then tucks the huge microfiber blanket around her shaking form.

“*Not a kid anymore,*” Fareeha whispers as her mom kisses her forehead. Her eyelids droop; her shutdown is imminent now that all of her energy has leached out of her muscles.

“*Still your mother,*” she quips, watching as Fareeha sinks into sleep. She releases the harmony orb, letting it float above her daughter’s head, and watches her expression truly relax for the first time in hours.

When Ana, Zenyatta and Satya finish cleaning Angela up, they roll their beds together. Satya, having grown the most familiar with the finer points of the doctor’s wings, carefully folds and positions them on her back so they can cover her with a thin blanket. Athena turns the temperature up now that the threat of infection has passed; all the open wounds have been healed. Satya helps

McCree and Genji maneuver a reclining chair next to the two beds so Ana, as promised, can stay with the pair until they wake up. Zenyatta leaves to recharge and Satya excuses herself as well, but not before bringing the older Amari a much-needed mug of tea

Cozy in the chair with a blanket and her tea, Ana watches the gentle rise and fall of the two blanketed forms before her. Naturally, her adopted daughter would have the wings of an angel. She can only imagine the flurry of activity on base if Angela been younger and still eager to get approval and opinions of others on anything she did. To have hidden this for a few days, maybe more if Winston's suspicions were correct, was borderline reckless. Fareeha must have been aware of it, Ana is sure of that. She has to wonder at what point Angela and Fareeha fought about keeping it a secret. Likely immediately. Fareeha, at least, knows better. But not enough to take care of herself where her girlfriend is involved. If it weren't for the shower, it might have been worse. She hasn't seen Fareeha shut down like that in nearly a decade. Her eyes drift to the harmony orb; she prays it works.

With nothing else to do but wait, Ana reclines and curls up to take a nap herself, drifting off to the quiet beeping of Angela's monitor.

Chapter End Notes

- please imagine 76 just dumping Reaper over the side of a castle like a trashbag
- also imagine edgelord 5000 grumbling through the evergreen forests in June being bitter that he can't teleport back to the castle bc it's too high up and any landable surfaces are out of his line of sight
- Ana helped young Angela with the Valkyrie schematics, back before Overwatch tech was stolen and used by Talon, before Ana's rifle was developed, before Angela realized that things she made to do good could be twisted. So she knows enough about it to help. Angela tries to forget about this bc she's always worried about the info getting into the wrong hands.
- RETCON Zen only puts harmony orbs on teammates outside of battle for extended periods of time at their request. He puts one on Fareeha briefly at the beginning of this chapter in a brief break of this because Fareeha was about to descend into a panic attack. (In the last chapter, if you read it before I fixed it, it looked like Angela's first orb wasn't voluntary.

Because the next chapter won't be up til next week (get ready for Angie's reaction!!!!), here's some notes that I didn't use because my vision for the past three chapters drastically shifted from my initial thoughts:

- italicized things are things that stayed even though I wasn't looking at this list while writing this chapter! I think it's funny how certain things were important enough in my head to keep
 - Originally Angela's injury creates a LOT of Guilt™ for Fareeha but I'm getting tired of picking on her tbh so this didn't happen
 - ?[Two things happened at once:
 - 1) The valkyries wings opened, speeding Mercy up to Pharah. She could see the smile on her face until it turned to one of horror.
 - 2) Pain exploded in Mercy's back and she watch Pharah kill her engines to plummet toward her. The Valkyrie slowed her fall but she didn't have any control over it. All she had at the moment was excruciating pain. (*this was written while I was writing, what chapter 4??!?!?!?*)
- Neural link from her halo she sends a command to open the wings and fly. This

signal is the same she'd use to open her wings, which are so close to "hatching", that respond. For a second it's simply a bit uncomfortable as they start jerking from within the suit but *the left one breaks the hard calloused bubble they're in, putting Angela in so much pain that she blacks out* for a couple of seconds, losing control over the suit and falling. Pharah drops to catch her, only to have to intercept an rocket or two heads for Angela as she's falling; talon seeing a chance to take out angela. Pharah counters with her own and the shrapnel wounds Angela worse. Angela's delirious or unconscious with pain and the jolt the wings have made trying to emerge *fucked up the bridge between her delivery port so she can't self heal.*]

?wings are tiny at first, covered in pinions, skin bubble falls off in time, smooth connection to back

?*Zen and satya are allowed to stay in the surgeon room*

?Too many surgeons in the medbay, ana kicks everyone out after torb casually suggests amputation and satya shoots him down with a beautiful argument of bodily autonomy

?Dont let fareeha wake up alone; genji stays with her

?Blistery effect of wings, tiny lymph bubbles conglomerating in to a hard mass (like my hands do). Angela's wings are super underdeveloped and tiny when they emerge from thier bubble if blood and lymph. One has broken through when Ana finally peels off the suit and the skin is hard calloused but flatttened around the shadow of the wings

?From my notes(*I was convinced I'd do this scene*): Ana knows field med. Has to get Fareeha out the room because her distraughtness is extra distracting to her mother as she tries to save the love of her child's life. Bonus points if Ana sleep darts Fareeha. Triple bonus if she shoots her in the back bc McCree and Genji are having a hard time with her *Plot twist: None of this happens and Kina is left devoid of bonus points.*

Fledgling

Chapter Summary

Angela wakes up, confused, but not alone.

Chapter Notes

this is 4500+ words and it's finals week so I gotta say this is the only chapter this weekend, sorry! I can't make any promises as to whether I might procrastinate on finals (I have 18+ pages in essays to write plus a poetry book and a Hindi final soooo) but next weekend I'll be done with finals. :3c
Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep.

This is a sound Angela hates to wake up hearing. Without opening her eyes, she knows she's fallen asleep in the hospital, in a back corner of an E.R. hallway. Not quite on-duty enough to be on the clock but not on call enough to be at home, suspended between responsibility to herself and to her field. Unfailingly, wherever she is stationed, there's always a nurse who takes it upon herself to mother her, force her to go to sleep in between surgeries or does a few of her rounds, brings her coffee or keeps sweets on hand, slipping them into the doctor's scrub pockets. Her dry tongue tangles with strands of her hair. She's definitely going to need some coffee before she returns to her office.

When she opens her eyes, Angela realizes she's not seventeen or eighteen anymore, not even twenty-two or thirty. She's thirty-seven and her hospital days are long behind her. In front of her, Fareeha's asleep, breathing deeply. One of Zenyatta's orbs floats over her girlfriend's hair, humming quietly. She spits her hair out and looks up to gray tiles and chrome-backed lights- the med bay. How did she get here? She tries to remember, blinking against the little streams of sunlight coming in from the window overhead. It's dim inside; the lights are low and the windows are blinded. It was daytime on the mission, too; she wonders how long she's been unconscious. She squints, remembering the parapet, Reaper, gunshots, *pain-*

A whimper slips out of her lips before she can stop it. She cranes her neck toward the beeping. Of course, it's not a nearby patient's- it's *hers*. She sucks in a breath and tries to push up quietly. The tape holding her IV down tugs against her arm as she wriggles it up. By the time gets her body in a plank position, Angela realizes she's stark naked. She flops back onto the bed, grateful she didn't try and rip the sheets off. The air between her and the bed rushes up and billows the sheet out. Cursing her carelessness, she braces herself for the pain when it settles but the sheets drift softly and do not cause pain, but a twitch. And then another twitch, like her nose is tickled. She doesn't dare to breathe. It doesn't hurt. It doesn't feel good or strange. It just feels like a sheet settling gently on her.

Now she's wide awake and thinking fast. She glances at Fareeha but she's sound asleep still. She

starts pulling the sheet around to her front, wriggling it around her chest like a toga of sorts. Once she's halfway decent, she sits up. The deflated blood pressure cuff is off with a quick tug and but the I.V. is the real trouble. A little bit of maneuvering gets her on her hands and knees. The bed creaks and she winces, reaching out for the flow control for the IV line. Her fingers graze it barely and the Swiss huffs, shuffling forward, trying to keep the sheet around her with one hand and grab the control with the other. Suddenly, her knee hits the soft spot where the two beds meet, pivoting her toward Fareeha. With a yelp, Angela throws out her arm for balance, abandoning the IV control and stumbling closer to the sleeping woman next to her. She flails backward to keep from falling on her, her muscles having a spasm in a way she cannot quite describe.

Angela freezes. She can feel the wind that's been stirred up but she can't shake the feeling that she created it. She shoots a glare at the windows but they're all closed. The sky outside offers no explanation, the brightness contrasts the dimmed lights of the med bay, but the blinds are not swaying in a breeze. She takes two breaths and tries to force herself to look over her shoulder but she can't bring herself to do it. She instead looks toward the mirror across the room; it'll have to do.

I.V. control forgotten, she plucks the needle out of her arm and presses a handful of the sheet to the hole it leaves. It'll leave a nasty bruise but she's not worried about that. She scrambles off the hospital bed, happy to find it so close to the ground. As soon as her soles touch the ground, Ana stirs from her seat in the arm chair. The doctor jumps, having been unaware of her presence.

"Well, welcome back, Angela. Athena, lift the lights, wouldn't you?" As the A.I. slowly brings up the lights, Ana untangles herself from the recliner and stands up, ignoring the urge to yawn in favor of approaching her startled patient. Unnoticed by the Swiss, her wings flutter slightly, puffing out in alarm. She can't help but smile at the sight.

"Welcome back indeed." Angela straightens up and wraps the sheet around herself more securely, making a skirt of the trailing sheet that's not covering her front. "I can only imagine the shape I was in since I'm here. Did we at least complete the objectives?"

Ana waves her hand. "Of course, but that's neither here nor there, Angela. How do you feel? You seem to have some idea of what's happened to you."

She pales, hands fisted in the sheet. During their exchange, she's been edging a little closer to the mirror over the hand-washing station. Now she stops and smiles sheepishly at Ana.

"I'm not exactly sure...how bad is it?"

Ana huffs out a laugh and Angela's brow furrows. She's expecting a frown or sympathy or anything except for laughter. Her thoughts spiral out of control trying to figure out what could have happened to her that would warrant laughter, of all things.

"Bad enough for you to take out your I.V. apparently. Jesse will never let you hear the end of that, what with all the trouble you've given him for sneaking out of the med bay over the years."

"Ana, please-"

"Come over to the mirror, dear. You are none worse for the wear." Angela follows Ana to the mirror, peeking at her profile as she edges into the view. Just before she can see her back, the older Amari spins her around to face her, to face away from the mirror.

"Angela, you have to promise me something before you can see."

The young doctor is practically vibrating with anticipation now, between the coiled tension in her shoulders and the blood leeching out of her brachial vein. She forces herself to take a deep breath

before speaking again.

"Of course, Ana."

"You can't keep this a secret from the rest of the team anymore."

Her face falls. Self-hatred etches itself on her brow and Ana sees this. With a frown, she tilts her younger woman's face up. "You're not the only person who can take care of you."

Angela can't help shooting a look at Fareeha. "Of course."

"Not just Fareeha either. You'll get both of you killed like that."

The blood drains from Angela's face at that. "I wouldn't-"

"Yes, you would. And you nearly did yesterday. I don't want you to take that lightly."

Angela clenches her jaw, but she manages to look Ana in the eye.

"I won't."

"Somehow, you are still as hard headed as you were when you were younger. It's difficult to tell you these things before they go wrong, but I don't actually like to scold you."

"Of course," says Angela, swallowing. "I understand. You have my sincerest apologies. Fareeha has been telling me, but I haven't been listening."

"And Winston, too. He's none too happy about this."

"I can imagine and I will apologize to him as well. I don't want-" Angela trails off as she hunches her shoulders and the tension her back loosens slightly. She jumps, feeling a slight tickle on the outside of her arms. She tries to turn around to look but Ana pulls her face back forward, pinching her cheeks.

"Ah, not yet. You must promise me something else! You cannot panic, Angela. We live in a strange world and none of us are exempt from that, least of all you. And then we must get you a bandage and a gown before you freeze."

With her cheeks squished something fierce, it's all she can do to nod vigorously until Ana releases her.

"Okay, you may look. Remember, I'm right here."

Tired of hesitating, Angela looks over her shoulder before she can lose her nerve and yelps. Her wings flare out in alarm, the silver flight feathers fanning out from their base of secondary feathers and fluffy down. She turns to face the mirror and spins around a couple of times, trying to get a better look at them. They are roughly the same length as the destroyed blisters, from the second joint of them to the tips. She watches them fold in neatly, just like the Valkyrie's mechanical ones, and flare open at the same thought that engages the hover. New muscles ache and burn, unsure of their finer purposes. They flap and fuss, their movements janky and uncoordinated, but Angela can't take her eyes off of them.

Ana chuckles as she watches Angela spin around in silent shock, her expression alternating between confusion and thinly-veiled delight. It's not long before the commotion wakes the only other person in the room.

Confused, Fareeha opens her eyes and sits up, feeling well rested. It takes a moment to identify exactly what her woke up: her mother's laughter, Angela's confused, barely audible squeaks.

"Angie?" Fareeha bats away the harmony orb until she remembers to take it out of her orbit. Once deactivated, she sits it on the covers that puddle around her lap.

Eyes wide, Angela spins around, her wings snapping into a closed position. What little delight in her posture drains as she takes in her lover's confused expression. She can't look her in the eye for more than few seconds, unsure of what to say. She stares at her feet instead, blushing furiously.

Fareeha tilts her head, almost able to forget the wings exist for a second if not for the tension in her body. She shoots a glance at her mother, who shrugs and leans over to stage whisper to the woman next to her.

"Angela, Fareeha has already seen your wings-"

"They're not *my* wings." The blonde grits out, glaring back at the mirror at the quivering limbs. "They are just there and hardly permanent. It will be easy enough to amputate them."

Fareeha sputters. Ana actually takes a step back.

"Angie, why would you-? You don't need to get rid of them." Fareeha starts to scramble out of the bed but her girlfriend turns on heel and stalks to her office, slamming the door behind her. She pauses for a second, trying to understand what happened, then untangles herself from the blanket and vaults over the beds. In three quick strides, she's at the doctor's office door. It's already locked.

"Angie, we just talked about this!" She knocks loudly on the door. When Angela doesn't respond, Fareeha shoots an irritated look at her mother, who throws up her hands.

Do something! Mouths Fareeha, gesturing to the door. Ana sighs and crosses her arms.

"Angela, you promised not to panic. If you do not come back out this very minute, I will never give the two of you my blessing and you will have to run far to elope." When the door still doesn't open, she adds, "And when you do not run far enough, I will assassinate the minister before you can finish the ceremony."

A beat, then two more. Angela yanks opens the door, now dressed in one of her sundresses with an open back. The sheet's wadded up and pressed to the inside of her elbow. Fareeha heaves a sigh of relief at the sight of the intact wings over her shoulder.

"They don't hurt," mumbles Angela, shifting from foot to foot as her wings flutter nervously behind her. "But I still don't want them."

"You can't just decide that now!" Fareeha can hardly believe this is the conversation they're having, but the flicking of the silver wings keeps her rooted in their bizarre reality.

"They're a liability, 'Reeha. I can't keep them!"

Throwing up her hands in exasperation, she shoots back, "How can you not want them? You don't even know anything about them yet!"

"I don't want to! Everything is complicated enough as it is!" hisses Angela, stomping her foot and planting herself in defiance. Her wings snap out to match her aggressive display and crack sharply against the doorjamb. Within seconds, she's crumpled to the ground, gasping in pain, her wings curled reflexively around her slender frame.

“You’re in love with an idiot,” murmurs Ana, ignoring the look her daughter shoots her way and heading over to the counter. Fareeha drops down to Angela’s level, grateful that her Arabic is mostly restrained to medically useful conversation.

“This is exactly what I’m talking about. Liability.” Angela groans, her voice muffled by her hands over her face. “Not to mention, this is ridiculous.”

“You stood in a doorway and opened your wings.” says Ana, crouching down with the supplies to bandage Angela’s elbow. “They’re not ridiculous, you are.”

Fareeha rolls her eyes but doesn’t say anything. There’s nothing to dispute.

“I didn’t mean to open them! They just did...” Uncovering her face, Angela trails off in her protest, sounding petulant even to her own ears. She holds out her arm when Ana gestures, doesn’t complain about the peroxide sting, and holds a cotton ball in place while the sniper wraps gauze around her elbow twice, then ties it off. Before she speaks again, she makes sure Angela’s making eye contact.

“I imagine Satya will have something to say about amputating perfectly good limbs for convenience.” She watches with grim satisfaction as Angela pales and practically wilts. When impassioned, the ex-Vishkar agent would give sermons on the importance of bodily autonomy, having been stripped of her own at such a young age. Having been a staunch supporter of the Indian woman since she’d defected, Angela can’t help feeling chagrined.

“I suppose she would.” Her wings return to their resting position without thinking. “I’m not thinking clearly, I apologize.”

“You promised not to panic.” Ana raises her eyebrow at her; Angela drops her gaze with a sigh.

“That I did and I did so immediately. I admit I have not been the most reliable lately.”

“You keep trying to deal with this by yourself, Angie,” Fareeha interrupts before her mother can continue. “And you’re making dumb decisions. You can’t just decide to amputate your wings because you’re freaking out.”

The blonde woman only nods tersely, massaging her temples. She gets to her feet with Fareeha’s help while Ana watches the pair like a hawk. Angela drops Fareeha’s hand as soon as she’s steady and stares out the blind-shaded window instead.

“Reeha,” says Ana, standing in a smooth motion. “Why don’t you start breakfast? It’s well past dawn.”

“I mean, I can wait for you two-” She catches the glare that her mother’s sending her. “Mom, seriously-”

“I’ll take coffee, dear, if you wouldn’t mind.” The winged woman offers a small smile. Fareeha grimaces but makes no further argument against the dismissal. They both watch her collect her slippers and leave the med bay, letting the door slam behind her.

As Ana tidies the counter, Angela slumps against the door frame, the cold metal chills her bare shoulder. Her wings droop behind her and she shivers at the alien sensation of the cold door behind her, sapping the heat from her feathers. She still frowns at the thought of them belonging to her, of being a part of her. The adrenaline from the panic ebbs slowly, leaving her drained and a little dizzy. Hunger boils in her gut but exhaustion threatens to win over it. Her eyelashes flutter as she struggles to keep her eyes open.

When Ana feels she's let the young doctor stew long enough she turns around to find her dozing against the door frame. Leaning on the counter, she clears her throat, startling her out of her shallow sleep but it isn't Angela she addresses.

"Athena, this Captain Amari speaking." At this, Angela straightens up, confused. Ana makes it very clear, to the point of annoyance, that she retains no rank in Overwatch.

"Good morning, Captain Amari. What can I do for you?"

"Athena, please disable any presence masking protocols that Dr. Angela Ziegler has access to until further notice from either myself or Winston."

"Wait a sec-" Angela squeaks but Ana holds up a single finger and she hushes.

"Additionally, Angela's on medical leave until further notice."

"First request granted, Captain Amari. However, indefinite medical leave requires Dr. Ziegler's approval."

"And I do no-" The doctor in question sputters but Ana lifts her voice up a notch and says, "alpha-alpha-eight-twelve-beta-delta-fourteen, override."

"Override accepted. Dr. Ziegler will remain on base until her medical leave is terminated."

"Thank you, Athena."

Angela does nothing to mask the disbelief in her voice. "Are you *grounding* me?"

"You're an adult now and you have wings; I couldn't ground you if I wanted to." Ana smirks. "But you are being terribly reckless, and I'd like you to keep it in a confined area until you realize that this isn't the end of the world."

She watches the younger woman droop, expression, shoulders, wings and all.

"Treat it like a virus, Angela. Let it run its course." As she expects, the doctor perks up at the analogy.

"I suppose that's one way to look at it." Angela glances over her shoulder and stretches, her brain scrambling to understand just exactly what she is doing. Her left wing responds slowly and she steps away from the door before she repeats her earlier mistake. The delighted expression starts small and slowly grows until Angela lets a small giggle. Ana suddenly understands the past 20 minutes.

"Angela, what makes you think Fareeha does not like you like this?" She watches Angela's expression shatter and her wings retreat again.

"It's strange. They shouldn't- I shouldn't-"

"You act as if you haven't known each other for nearly two decades. Sweet child, she was *worried sick*. She all but passed out yesterday more than once over you. Fareeha is not so shallow to not love you after this. She still chased you when you ran, didn't she?"

Feeling small, Angela nods.

"You fool." says Ana fondly, stepping closer. "I won't always be here to sort you two out, you know?"

Her throat closes at the thought of losing Ana for good, so she nods again. Her adoptive mother reaches up and ruffles her hair, then pulls her into a hug. For the second time that morning, Angela feels like a teenager again. Then her stomach growls loudly, ruining the moment.

Ana laughs, pulling back to pinch her cheeks. “You’re such a cranky baby bird. I think you’ll feel better after breakfast. We should get you cleaned up, make you look a little less like you just crawled out of an egg.”

Angela rolls her eyes. She can’t deny that a shower and breakfast sounds amazing. She rummages in one of the cabinets until she finds a pair of socks to ward off the cold tile of the watchpoint. Her wings flap wildly about for balance as she puts them on.

“You can’t fly yet, dear!”

“Ana, not the bird jokes, please.”

“I don’t have a choice! Fareeha’s declared angel jokes unfunny and if I treat you too seriously, you’ll do something stupid.” Ana shoos her ahead of her, powers down the medical equipment, and locks the med bay door behind them. Before Angela even asks, she hands her back her key ring necklace that had been removed along with the rest of the suit prior to the surgery.

“Ana, thank you.” Angela says, tucking the keys back into her dress as they take the back way toward the living quarters. “I don’t think anyone could have cared for me after the mission yesterday the way you have.”

The sniper shrugs gracefully but she’s grinning. “I do know field med, Angela. Not all of us had to go med school.”

“Of course,” replies Angela, ducking and hiding a smile of her own. Her wings fluff and quiver, giving her away. They walk in companionable silence for the rest of journey. Ana promises to come to Angela’s room after her own shower so they can walk to the kitchen together. The younger woman breathes a sigh of relief at that; she hasn’t come up with a good way to explain the situation to her teammates.

Angela makes a beeline for her shower, unbuttoning the top buttons of the dress and letting it fall to her feet, toeing out of her socks. She starts up the shower and edges in, flattening herself against the wall underneath the shower head. It takes a few tries before she’s willing to edge a wing into the spray. She feels only warmth and a tickle, nothing unusual. Having confirmed that, she takes her shower as usual, using a handled loofah to get to difficult spots under her wings. Because of what she knows about birds, she keeps her body wash and shampoo away from her feathers. Stripping any oils on them would prove nothing short of disastrous. She bends over to wash her hair, getting lost in logistics until Athena alerts her that Ana is waiting outside her door. She turns off the shower and asks Athena to let Ana in, grateful that her room is not a mess.

Drying off is an adventure. Her wings and hair drip the most, of course. Her hair can be dealt with as usual with a towel but her wings pose a problem. Though she can extend and retract them at will, Angela does not quite understand how to flap them yet. Instead, she lifts one leg up and purposely unbalances herself until her wings flap enough to relieve most of the water. All things considered, it works well.

She emerges from the bathroom, one towel around her hair and another wrapped around herself. Ana’s reading on the other side of the room in the beanbag and looks up when she steps into the main room.

“I found an old blouse of mine at the back of my closet. Should fit you and your wings.” Angela

glances over at her bed and sure enough, there's a dark blue half-sleeved blouse with a heart-shaped hole cut out of the back draped over the foot of her bed. She snorts, grabbing her underwear, the shirt and the rest of her outfit and disappearing back into the bathroom.

Twenty minutes later, Angela emerges positively glowing. Aside from a new wrapping around her elbow, she's dressed like it's any other summer day on the Watchpoint. Her hairs mostly dry, now brushed and in her usual ponytail. Her wings look a little mussed but that's to be expected, having been shoved through the hole of the blouse. They move freely within the cutout though. Ana, having gotten up and moved toward the door, watches them flutter absently as Angela roots around in her closet for a pair of sandals. From the way Ana is also dressed- linen blouse and denim jeans- one wouldn't think they were international miscreants. With Angela confined to the base and Ana self-assigned to her, there's no reason for either of them to expect active duty any time soon. Angela flicks her wings out once more, but they still look messy. They argue for a quick second before Angela allows her to straighten out some of the bigger feathers and align the secondaries in their proper directions. Finally, Angela's ready.

As they walk toward the kitchen, Angela can't help feel her appetite shrink as she hears the commotion from down the hall. Ana reaches out and pats her shoulder but it doesn't stop her from flattening her wings against her back.

Sure enough, the main kitchen and dining room is full of most of the team, cooking, eating, and creating a festive mood. Genji and Mei are arguing about the tea they're making while Zarya's nabbing a red bean bun from one of Mei's dim sum steamers. Jesse's helping Fareeha set up a bar for huevos rancheros. Jamison's flipping pancakes on the stove while Lena ferries them to the kitchen island which is quickly getting overloaded with various foods. Jack's checking on a squash dish that's sitting next to a pan of scrambled tofu. Mako and Hana are making a game of inventing place setting for all the couches and stools and chairs in the adjacent dining area; Hana's losing. Satya's watching with concern as Hanzo pokes at something in a slow cooker. It's not until Lucio looks up from where he's taking a jug of orange juice out of the fridge that anyone notices Ana and Angela in the doorway.

"You're here!" He shouts over the din and everyone looks up now, the room filling with cheers instead of the usual banter of their gathering. Ana chuckles and Angela finds it contagious. Fareeha grabs a mug and fills it with coffee, crossing the room and pressing it into her hands with a lingering touch. The shorter woman stretches up on tiptoe to give the Egyptian a kiss on the cheek and receives one in return; it's all she can do to keep her wings from fluttering wildly like her heart.

"We were to have this feast last night," explains Zarya around a mouthful of bean bun, "but your health was a concern. We waited until this morning. Do not worry, we mostly had everything cooked."

"But it ain't breakfast without eggs," quips Jesse, as he cracks a few more onto a sizzling pan. Coffee delivered, Fareeha hurries back over to stir the refried beans before they begin to burn. Angela huffs out a laugh at that.

"Are you feeling well, Angela?" Satya's cool voice cuts across the room, her eyebrows raised expectantly. She freezes, trying to think of the best way to present this. Fareeha shoots her an encouraging smile; she takes a deep breath and sips at her coffee. Fareeha loves her. Ana loves her. If it doesn't matter to them, it won't matter to anyone.

Ana jabs her gently in the ribs and whispers, "You may as well be dramatic, dear. You only get to do this once."

Angela smiles into her drink. Overwatch is nothing if not full of dramatics. Lowering her mug, she

steps forward, being sure to put the sniper out of range. She's thankful she allowed her to fix her feathers earlier.

"I guess you could say I've finally lived up to my name." She shrugs, then flicks out her wings.

Even as small as they are, they create a sharp *whoosh* as they spread. Their platinum sheen glints in the bright light with soft white-blond shadows where they overlap. Most of the downy feathers are hidden behind her back and so they appear fully fledged. To anyone who knows any physics, which is most of the team, they'll know they're far too small to fly with, even at her size and weight. That doesn't stop the room from going pin drop silent, doesn't stop all of its occupants' eyes from becoming wide as saucers, doesn't stop every jaw from dropping.

Ana just laughs. She has the best daughters.

Chapter End Notes

-Grandma/Mom/Foster Mom Ana is life and i aM LIVING

-I love Ana-Angela-Fareeha family dynamic so much. I'm a believer in tiny broken Angela joining OW at 17 and still being a child in a lot of ways, even if she's hardened by war and loss and college sucking the life out of her. And 12 year old Fareeha and Mom Ana being the only people in OW who see the teenager in her (everyone else respects her as Dr. Ziegler, which is fine by her until it's not, rip). So Ana mothers Angela in the gentlest of ways and Angela gets attached to her as a mother figure. They mostly pick up where they left off after the recall and Ana's return, albeit with more sarcasm and sniping on Angela's part and Ana's cynicism and snark. You know how Barry and Iris in the flash have one dad in Joe? It's like that, okay? Oh my god Pharmercy is Westallen and I'm crying.

-I am usually very careful with time and I apologize if it seems a little skewed here. to clarify- Angela's been asleep throughout the Gibraltar afternoon and night and now it's morning. It's June 21st, 2077, around 9-10am.

-I love Ana Amari sfm, listen,

-Part of Angela is in love with having wings, the other part is freaking out :)))) i'm so sorry

-Angela's wings are perfectly fine touchwise now :)

-This is the blouse that Ana gives Angela: <http://bit.ly/2pJsXSx>

Tuesday Brunch

Chapter Summary

Overwatch is a wacky bunch.

Chapter Notes

"Oh Kina! Did you finish your essay?"

Just shut up and enjoy this 2k banter fluff chapter. TT^TT

(No, I like writing this for y'all more than I like writing about the origins of American Exceptionalism.)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

With the metaphorical bomb dropped, Angela blushes and ducks to sip at her coffee, letting her wings slowly relax and fold against her back once more. It's not until they're out of sight once again that anyone speaks up. Surprisingly, it's Jamison.

"Blimey, Ziegler, those are fancy! Wha' kind of scrap you use for those?" A great deal of tension leaves the room when Angela makes no move to dispute him and continues to sip quietly at her coffee instead.

"Make no mistake, Jamison," says Satya serenely, rising from her seat at the bar counter. "They are flesh and blood. This is no ruse."

This creates a predictable amount of chaos.

"Oh my god, no fucking way!" squeals Hana, abandoning her place settings and bounding over just as Mei exclaims, "They're so beautiful!"

As the chaos erupts further, Angela edges closer to Ana who squeezes her shoulder gently. Lena yells out something about being the only allowed impossibility on the team to which Winston points out that she already has so much competition in that regard that Angela's wings barely register. McCree lets out a low whistle to which Fareeha responds with a kick in the shin. Jack's visor brightens briefly; the heat signature of the wings is significantly hotter than Angela's core temperature, but still low enough to rule out machinery. He nods once, then gets back to arranging the breakfast buffet. Neither Mako, Genji, or Hanzo seem terribly surprised.

"Quiet!" shouts Zarya, still trying to process the development. Everyone turns to look at the Russian. "Angela. You cannot just *say* that. How did this happen?"

"It's a long story and I will tell you, but I'm starving," says the medic, before she can think about her words. The coffee's done nothing but sharpen her appetite. "Can I eat first?"

"Of course, you can," says Fareeha, sweeping a glare across the room before grabbing a plate and handing it to her. Angela follows her to the island as the room quiets down. Having effectively

removed herself from the conversation, she's free to fill her plate without interruptions. However, her teammates are having a hard time returning to any unrelated conversation or banter and no one wants to talk about her as if she is not there. The room stays fairly quiet as Angela retreats to the barstools, perching on her safe stool in the corner. Fareeha takes a seat next to her with a plate of her own, then watches with thinly veiled amusement as she immediately inhales half the plate.

The rest of the team follows suit and grabs their brunch, settling down in various places in the dining area and kitchen. Hana only takes a few foods before parking herself next to Fareeha and nibbling distractedly. The winged woman is far too focused on her food to notice the gamer brimming with anticipation. She doesn't dare ask anything yet, but she's *ready*.

By the time the last few people have begun to serve themselves, Angela's plate is empty and she's staring forlornly at the kitchen island laden with the remaining food, wings twitching impatiently. Wordlessly, Fareeha holds a spare vegetable egg roll out to her and watches as Angela leans over to bite it, only to squeak when she realizes she's eating on autopilot. She bites her lip to keep from laughing at her flustered girlfriend and hands her the rest of the egg roll once she's swallowed.

Ana, having been one of the last ones in line, brings over not only her own plate, but another for Angela. She sits her own plate in front of Fareeha, who, in a true daughterly fashion, immediately nicks one of the two huevos rancheros for herself. She smiles; the sharp tang of jalapenos wafting up signifies it was meant for her anyways.

Angela's plate is brimming with one or two servings of all the vegetarian options on the buffet, with an extra large of portion of the tofu scramble. Overall, it's easily twice the size of what the doctor dared to take for herself.

"Here you are, baby bird!" Ana announces with a flourish. Angela rolls her eyes and thanks her. Hana giggles, watching the exchange with rapt attention as the little group grows; Satya creates stools for herself and Ana on the other side of the breakfast bar. Angela pushes a couple of sesame balls in her mouth and finds that she doesn't really care that they're not-so-subtly watching her eat. She still feels like she hasn't eaten in days.

Fifteen minutes later, and only partially for show, she mutters, "Ana, I'm sure I cannot eat all of this." Only halfway through her plate, Angela picks up her fork again anyway and stabs at several slices of squash. Ana only smiles and sips at her tea. Satya watches with interest as Angela, perhaps unwittingly, stretches out a wing to trail across Fareeha's back. Judging by the smirk on her face at Fareeha's startled yelp, she decides it was probably not so unwittingly done after all. Both Angela and Ana burst into giggles.

"Oi, Angela!"

"Still eating!" She calls out around a mouthful of food.

"Bollocks!" Lena shoots back, sounding surprisingly irritated. She swivels on the seat to look over at the Brit; the rest of the team hastily pretends they haven't been staring at her wings this entire time. "You're giggling! You can't just leave us hanging like this!"

She swallows her food and resigns herself to an attempted explanation.

"My apologies. I'm afraid I don't really *have* an explanation for you. Not a full one anyway." Predictably, everyone dissolves into an uproar.

"But," Angela pushes on, ignoring the din, "I'm working on it. Between this mission and the last there was evidently a great deal of molecular restructuring. There was likely a mistake in some coding, a flaw somewhere in the nanites I use... I haven't had the time to check yet. I've barely

been awake an hour.”

“Wait, wait, wait,” Hana starts excitedly. “Can you fly with them? Because-”

“They’re too small!” More than half the room answers at once. The collective irritation brings a pout to the gamer’s face.

“But they may grow.” Satya adds this so softly that no one hears her except for the other women seated at the breakfast bar. Angela blanches, her neck popping as she whips around to look the Indian woman who’s already lost in thought. Even Fareeha looks nervous at the idea. Ana lifts an eyebrow.

“If we assume they have a function, and that function is to provide flight capability, then we must assume they will grow. They’re not miniatures of fully fledged wings. There are juvenile characteristics evident: down, pin feathers, numerous undeveloped follicles. Because of this, we must assume there has been growth already; thus there will continue to be a great deal. Especially with your current caloric intake.” As she speaks, she pulls up a hard-light tablet and begins doing calculations. Angela’s trying to figure out why Satya knows all of this until she processes the last thing she’s said.

“My caloric intake?”

“Of course. You’ve consumed close to 3000 kilocalories already. By my calculations, once we factor in heat loss, that should be enough to-”

Ana reaches over and gently covers Satya’s tablet until she looks up at Angela’s deeply embarrassed expression, face red and wings tight.

“My apologies. I only meant to help provide an explanation.” Satya averts her eyes and destroys the tablet with a wave of her prosthetic hand. Fareeha reaches over and intertwines Angela’s fingers with her own, clasping gently until some of the tension leaves her shoulders.

“Y’all’re whispering again!” Jesse calls out from his seat on the couch. Angela flicks a wing in annoyance before turning around again and answering him.

“As I was saying, it’s not a simple fix. It might be permanent. I simply do not know yet. I will have to wait and see what happens, Jesse. Nothing is clear right now.”

“Hold on a tick...” Lena pauses when everyone’s eyes fall on her, perched on the edge of the couch. “Ah, Angie, when you fell last week, were you- did you already-?”

Angela winces at the memory. “Yes, that was just after I became aware of an anomaly, just not to this extent. None worse for the wear, though. No worries.”

Lena makes a face. “Ouch.”

“Okay fine, you don’t know the science behind them, but are they *soft*?” Hana demands, in a way that makes it clear that she believes she’s asking the important questions. Fareeha bristles, answering before Angela can even open her mouth.

“She’s not a bird, Hana! You can’t just pet her!”

“I only asked if they were soft!”

“You’re implying it. You wouldn’t ask to pet her arm!”

“Arms don’t look fluffy! And everyone has arms; they aren’t special!”

Winston pipes up. “Hana, you still can’t ask to pet someone.”

“I *didn’t*!” Hana snaps, turning to glare at the gorilla. “I only asked if-”

“Angela, are you alright?” Most of the room has turned their attention to Hana and Fareeha, others to Winston. At Jack’s interruption, every eye lands on Angela who’s completely flushed from nose tip to earlobe, fiddling nervously with the hem of her shirt with her free hand. Her wings droop listlessly behind her.

“Yes, of course, I’m quite alright.” They can all clearly tell this is not the case. The team fidgets, collectively ashamed of their fawning and arguing. Several murmured apologies are heard.

After wrestling with the technicalities of her question and her pride, Hana finally blurts, “Alright, I’m sorry, Angie! I just got a little excited.”

“It’s not any less than I would have expected. All these inquiries are delightful and all, but what I haven’t said is that on account of all these uncertainties, I cannot accompany you on missions. Indefinitely.” Angela, golden child of Overwatch and unparalleled field medic, braces herself for another uproar but there’s only hushed silence.

“A reasonable course of action.” Zarya’s tone is one of approval; her gaze sweeps the room, daring them to argue.

Mei beams at Zarya, then at Angela. “Of course! If something goes wrong, you could get hurt! We’d rather not lose you, Angela.”

“Very nearly did yesterday. Would have been the end of Overwatch.”

“Don’t be so dramatic, Jack.” Ana sips her tea, eye glinting in amusement. Angela squirms in her seat, wings fluttering uncertainly. This is not the reaction she’d expected at all. Fareeha watches her nibble at her lip, then squeezes her hand gently until she stops. There’s still the issue of the remaining food on Angela’s plate, but she won’t broach the subject until all of the attention is off of her again.

“Well, if you’re sure, I’ll focus on researching them.” Her wings fluff out and she breathes a sigh of relief. They truly were a weird bunch to put up with all of this.

“Angela, I knew there was something wrong. I should have never let you come with us yesterday.”

“I’m an adult, Winston,” she reminds him gently. That doesn’t stop the gorilla from frowning as he remembers catching her falling body in midair. She shoots a glance at Ana before continuing. “I knew there was a risk and I went anyway. If anything, it’s all of you I should be apologizing to.”

A beat of silence. Then Mako takes a deep breath and speaks, startling everyone: “It’s fine.”

“Yeah, all’s well that ends well and all that jazz!” crows Jamison, nudging the quiet man next to him. He points his fork at Angela, who raises her eyebrows expectantly. “I do wanna know though, don’t look at me that that, just humor us: are you a bird or an angel?”

Angela huffs out a gentle laugh and shrugs, shifting her wings as she does so. “Neither? Both? Just another Overwatch oddity, I suppose.”

“That’s cute.” Fareeha smirks at her girlfriend’s confused expression. “As if you hadn’t been an oddity all along.”

Angela’s wicked grin promises that she’s gonna get a pillow in the face for that later.

Chapter End Notes

-Happy [american] Mother’s Day to those who celebrated it! If you are blessed to have a kind mother, I hope you have had the experience of stealing something from your mom’s plates, only to realize she put it there for you to steal. You thought you was slick, but mother knows all.

-buffet is based on my college’s sunday brunch menu. I’m a really detailed oriented writer, hope y’all don’t mind

-whoops, the Shimadas are super quiet about this...sorry! They are the magic dragon bros tho nothing phases them. (It’s really really hard to keep track of everyone.) Also rein and torb are sleeping in! (really really hard to keep track) Zenyatta and bastion don’t eat- I’m making excuses there’S TOO MANY CHARACTERS I AM BUT A SMALL PERSON WHO IS USED TO SMALL CASTS. I CLEARLY HAVE MY FAVORITES AND IM SORRY

-jesse is my outlet for y’all conglomerations, bless that southern boy

-shit it’s hard to write all these kids. I’m gonna send half of them on a mission so i don’t have to deal with them for the rest of the fic

-also, im sort of feeling this fic wind down, the angst is mostly spent and i feel like this is gonna be a fluff bucket for the remaining chapters unless i do something awful which im not terribly interested in doing. Maybe if i write a sequel? I’m gonna cap the chapter count at 20 for now though.

-what i really want to do is spend the most time drawing out my favorite scenes from this fic which...there’s a lot. but i think in pictures so that’s not surprising

-NOW IM GONNA WRITE MY ESSAYS OKAY THANKS BYE

-next chapter i’m going back to my small bird fam of angela, fareeha, ana, and satya bc this OW fam has got me sweating

End Notes

NOTE: This updates sporadically, typically on weekends, when I have the most time to write, or when I get a bit of time to write during the week. I don't want to put your expectations on certain updates on certain dates but rest assured, I am devoted to this fic and refuse to abandon it. I didn't think anyone was interested in this but I was clearly mistaken; that's enough motivation for me!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!